

























FOR ALMOST HALF A CENTURY

The Leading Family Weekly:

THE  
NEW YORK LEDGER.



FEATURES OF THE "LEDGER":

1. Carefully chosen serial stories, beautifully illustrated, with synopses of all preceding installments, new readers being thus enabled to begin at any issue.
2. Short stories based on the most interesting current topics.
3. Valuable historical articles.
4. A delightful "Woman's Page," giving useful information regarding household questions.
5. Short and crisp editorials on matters of the moment.
6. Interesting popular descriptions of the latest wonders of science.
7. A profusion of beautiful illustrations.

**A Four-Dollar Paper for Only TWO Dollars.**

FREE TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS:

Our Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and Fourth-of-July Numbers, with beautifully *illuminated* covers, will be sent without extra charge to all our subscribers.



**Subscription Price, \$2.00 a Year.**

ADDRESS:

Publishers NEW YORK LEDGER,  
NEW YORK CITY.



"A GOOD FRENCH NOVEL."

---

# MADemoiselle DESROCHES

BY

ANDRE THEURIET,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

By META DE VERE.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY C. EDWARDS.*

12mo. 320 Pages. Illustrated. Handsomely Bound in Cloth,  
Price, \$1.00. Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

---

André Theuriet is a name well known to readers of choice fiction. Her novels occupy a high place in modern French literature. Many of them have been translated and published here, but this one, so far as we can ascertain, is entirely new. It is the story of a French physician's daughter brought up by a French peasant family, whose good sense and delicacy of feeling are strengthened by a simple country life. Her subsequent history is full of interest, and shows how closely character and truth and romance are related.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid,  
on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS. New York



MYNHEER JOE.



PZ3  
R19Myn

COPYRIGHT, 1893  
BY ROBERT BONNER'S SONS.

---

*(All rights reserved.)*





# MYNHEER JOE.

---

## *BOOK ONE.*

### THE MESSENGER FROM KHARTOOM.

---

#### CHAPTER I.

AT SHEPHERD'S, ON THE SQUARE CALLED ESBEHIYEH.

"Backsheesh!" hoarsely whispered a stout, red-faced traveller, bending over a small, nervous man, who, seated on the piazza in front of the well-known Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, dashes off page after page of lead-pencil work, aided by the lights that illumine the grand plaza.

The latter individual never raises his eyes, but with a groan and a mechanical movement of the arm draws a piaster from his pocket and holds it up,



which miserable coin is gravely taken by the man in the plaid suit and travelling helmet-hat. He does not move away, but stands there at the elbow of the scribe, waiting for that interminable scribbling to be done, and meanwhile watching the lively scene upon the great square of Esbehiyeh.

It is certainly a sight good for foreign eyes, and one that will never be forgotten. Although the month is February, a delicious, balmy atmosphere hangs over the old city on the Nile. Music throbs upon the air, and, judging from the gay scenes to be met with after night closes in, it would be hard to believe the Mohammedan fast corresponding to our Lent is in progress. The Koran, however, only demands observance of strict rules from sunrise to sunset, so that in all oriental countries the devout worshipers make night a period of feasting.

Just at the present period, many lanterns and flambeaux and lamps illumine the grand square, from which arise discordant sounds, a perfect babel of confusion. Here, under a cluster of palms, a snake-charmer handles his cobras with apparent impunity, boxing their heads and causing them to do all manner of strange things. Near by are dragomans, or guides, haggling with owners of donkeys, who, in turn, scold or cuff the boys in charge of the little beasts.

Close by are fakirs, pretending to sell wonderful things for a trifle; mountebanks, dealers in turbans, fezes, relics and handkerchiefs, and a general conglomeration of idle, curious strollers.

The lights disclose a picture that can probably be looked upon in no other city save Damascus. Here



mingle Turks, with their red fez and national dress; Arabs, in white bournous and turban; native fellahin, or Egyptians, wearing blue gowns and the everlasting brown skull-cap; Jews, with long beards and sober garments; Nubians, Persians, Greeks and a sprinkling of foreigners. The red coats of British soldiers give way pretty much to the sensible white that is worn in all hot countries; still there is enough to lend color to the kaleidoscopic picture.

The stout man sees all this without emotion; he seldom if ever, allows himself to be so deeply interested in anything as to forget himself. Standing just back of the tilted chair of the smaller man, who writes sheet after sheet with railroad rapidity, he puffs away at his cigar and calmly waits for the time to come when his friend will have exhausted the subject or blunted all his pencils. Everything comes to the one who has patience, and this is the most prominent trait in the character of the stout tourist.

"Eureka! I have done it! Glowing description! Burning rhetoric! Do you proud, my boy! Now I'd give a piaster to run across Grimes."

He has hardly spoken these words half aloud, when the man with the florid face and heavy hand deliberately raps him on the shoulder.

"Pay your debts, young man. I claim the reward by virtue of discovery. Here's one miserable Turkish coin you've shoved on me. French money is preferred," he says, solemnly.

"Oh! It was you who groaned '*Backsheesh!*' in my ear, was it? I've heard little else since I struck Egypt. It's a howling paradise of beggars. I go



to bed with a bag of piasters—give 'em out in my sleep, I assure you, Grimes."

Sandy Barlow is the correspondent of a great daily journal in the United States, and is never known to be in anything but a hurry. In piping times of peace he finds material to employ his pencil in various foreign countries, and his letters have been considered fine reading on account of their piquancy and crisp style, characteristic of everything the man does.

Those who know Sandy best have discovered that the war correspondent has a warm heart, and will readily go out of his way to help one whom he counts a friend. This stout gentleman whom he calls Grimes is—so rumor says—the wealthy owner of several mines in Colorado, about which he occasionally speaks. He keeps his own counsel, however, and any one who is a good judge of physiognomy would have little difficulty in reading on his resolute face all the signs that go to make up a determined character.

"Are you at liberty, Barlow? If so, I'd like to have a little talk," remarks the silver king.

"Great Cæsar! Why didn't you say so before? Singular man! Didn't want to interrupt the flow of genius, eh? But I'd drop even my pencil to oblige you."

"There was no great need of haste. You were the first one I thought of when old Tanner brought me the news. You know him?"

"Like a book! Gruff old party; lovely daughter, Molly. Go on! What was his news? Is England aroused at last to the emergency?"



"Just the contrary. Listen to what I say: Old Tanner tells me his dahabeah, or house-boat, has just come down the river; they left it some two hundred miles above and hastened on by railroad to Cairo. This evening it arrived, and the *reis*, or captain, called upon him at the hotel here with certain news that has given Tanner some uneasiness. He was puzzled to know what use to make of it, and, seeing me, put the whole case in my hands. I have promised to go down to the boat and interview the man who is now asleep on board—a man they picked up afloat on the river far above—and who they imagine is some sort of messenger sent down from Khartoom by General Gordon."

Sandy Barlow is out of his chair like a shot, all eagerness and animation.

"Come on!" he exclaimed. "I'm in this game. Great Cæsar! If I can get the only authentic account of *that* event! What keeps you, man?"

"I'm not ready to go yet. Don't make a scene, Sandy, and, above all, whisper not a word of the truth. The False Prophet has many friends in Cairo who would like nothing better than a chance at this person who comes from the south, with scimiter or yataghan. Sit down again while we talk it over."

Sandy has hard work subduing his intense eagerness to discover the truth, but he is equal to great emergencies, and finally sinks back in his chair. As for Mr. Grimes, the silver king, he straddles a rattan seat and rests his arms across the back in the most careless manner imaginable.

"What did the old orator seem to think of his men picking up a passenger?" asks Sandy.



"He was wrathful at first, until he found the man was a Frank, or foreigner. That made it all right. He hates these swarthy natives—Turks, fellah and Arab."

"Yes, I have heard him whisper gentle words about them in his own peculiar way. Lovely soft voice the Honorable Demosthenes has. Reminds me of a steam foghorn."

"Hush! Here comes his daughter!"

"Miss Molly, for all the world!" mutters the correspondent between his teeth.

A vision in white floats up to where they are seated, and both men spring to their feet. This American girl is a fair, fresh picture—a healthy daughter of the land across the sea. She is not actually beautiful, but there is a charm about face and manner that draws hosts of friends to her side. Mollie Tanner is a taking girl, vivacious, quick, tender-hearted—*true*. You can read her constancy in the clear, frank, fearless gray eyes. Lucky the man who wins her heart. It will be for all time.

"Oh, Mr. Grimes, I have been looking for you everywhere! I feared you had gone!" exclaims the young lady, laying a white hand, which shows some traces of sunburn, on the arm of the mining king.

"Fortune favors me, Miss Molly. In what way can I do you a service?"

"You see, the governor has just been telling me all about that poor man on board our boat, and I feel so sorry! I would like to know whether there is anything I can do for him."

Some people might be shocked to hear Molly Tanner thus designate her parent, but the word is



uttered with such tenderness that the same persons would secretly listen in the hope of hearing it again.

Mr. Grimes and the correspondent exchange glances, and then smile.

"Really, until we have seen the party, we cannot exactly say," begins the former.

"That's just it! Why not allow me to accompany you to the boat?"

The girl speaks eagerly, as though she has quite set her heart upon it.

"Your father would not consent."

"Leave that to me—I can manage him!"

"And I reckon you're about the only one who can, Miss Molly. Outside of that I don't believe it would be safe. You see, to reach the river where the boat is tied up, we have to pass through one of the worst quarters of the city called Musr, and with a lady in our company, there might be trouble. No, I am sorry to refuse, but I must positively decline to accept the responsibility."

Molly Tanner does not pout, but laughs, proving that while the old governor has done his best to spoil her, he has not yet succeeded.

"Very well, I shall not insist, Mr. Grimes; but when you return, promise to let me know how the young German pilgrim is," she says.

"Who said he is German; your father did not say anything of that sort to me?" declares the stout silver king, in some surprise.

"Perhaps I only judged it from his name. You know the Germans and Italians are working down along the East Coast."



"Even his name the governor neglected to state. What might it be, Miss Molly?" asked Grimes.

"I am sure he said Mynheer Joe."

"Mynheer Joe!" gasps Sandy Barlow.

"Mynheer Joe!" drops from the usually demonstrative silver king, now greatly excited.

"Why, gentlemen, what is the matter? You seem to be astonished?" says Molly, surveying first one and then the other in wonder.

"Astonished? I'm dumfounded—knocked all in a heap—flabbergasted! To think that I should meet my dear Joe again in this way!" bursts out the impetuous correspondent.

"And, on my part, after all, I'm not surprised. It's just what I might have expected, knowing what I do of the man. Yes, Mynheer Joe has been with Gordon at Khartoom; he was last heard of there. Now we shall see what news he brings. I am ready if you are, Mr. Barlow?"

Sandy smiles as he remembers that this man, now all eagerness to depart, was in no hurry before, but took things in a cool manner, as though the world was not made in a day, and Obed Grimes had no need of haste. Circumstances alter cases, and the mere mention of a name has put new energy in Mr. Grimes.

Nor is the war correspondent less eager to be on the way. He has received something of a shock upon hearing Molly speak that name. Memories of the past are recalled, which take him to other scenes.

"You will pardon us for leaving you?" says the polite Mr. Grimes to the young girl



"Certainly. Indeed, you cannot go too soon to please me. I am anxious to hear what this poor man has to say. To me General Gordon has always been the hero of heroes, and any one who comes from him demands my attention and sympathy. Go then to this poor German, see what he most needs, and if Molly Tanner or her father can in any way help him, do not neglect to give me notice."

Again the two men glance toward each other and smile, but although she sees this, there is no explanation made of their actions.

Bowing to the young American girl, they turn away, leaving the piazza of the hotel.

"Remember!" floats her warning voice after them, and Mr. Grimes, turning, waves his hand.

Then they are lost in the crowd that jostle elbows in the square called Esbehiyeh, in front of Shepherd's Hotel. Around them sound the voices of dragoman and fakir, mule driver and peddler, mountebank and camel driver, while the barking of dogs can be heard everywhere, the streets of Cairo literally running wild with curs.

"Are you armed?" asks the correspondent, as they cross the grand plaza and head into a street that leads from it down to the river Nile.

The silver king chuckles.

"Never go without a revolver, my boy. Learned that habit years ago," he replies.

"Yes, you Western men generally do carry a whole armory on deck. Beastly region we have to pass through. Black as—as—well, Egypt."

"Let's hire a light—no getting around in this quarter without one."



They discover near by one of those link-boys, whose trade is fast dying out in Cairo since the improvements advanced by British rule. Time was, and not so very long ago either, when, after sunset on moonless nights, the great city on the Nile was wrapped in darkness, and the law compelled any one moving abroad to carry a lighted lantern or flambeau.

The city being divided into three distinct quarters, separated by gates, and known as the regions of Copts, Jews, and Franks, no one could pass through after nightfall unless bearing a light.

In many parts of the strange, whited city on the east bank of the Nile, it is still necessary to carry a torch or lantern, unless one means to invite all manner of dangers, although the law with regard to this thing has fallen into desuetude since the English have made so many innovations with their charge of affairs after the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882.

A boy is engaged to go ahead with a light, and the two Franks, as all foreigners are called in Egypt, boldly plunge into the lower region of Cairo, fronting on the Nile.

Now and then they pass remarks and joke, for the newspaper correspondent is nothing if not humorous. The frequent mention of that singular name, "Mynheer Joe," proclaims that they are exchanging confidences regarding their experiences in connection with this person in the past.

Sandy is frank in all he says, and there can be no doubt regarding his fervid admiration for the man





AS HE TURNS, THEY MEET.—See Chapter III.







whom they expect to find on board the dahabeah of Demosthenes Tanner.

“It was at the storming of Alexandria I first met Mynheer Joe. I was then, as now, a correspondent, and ready to undergo all manner of dangers, in order to get the freshest news, even to holding a wire all day rather than let another man beat me.

“When the time came to land, in order to save the city from the mob, Arabi being defeated, I found myself thrown in the company of one who was a stranger to me. He came from a British war-ship. Liked his looks from the first, and side by side we went through the streets of Alexandria. Firing all around us—got in numerous little engagements; was once surrounded by a pack of howling native troops, who thought they could wipe us out. Mr. Grimes, you missed the sight of your life in failing to see how Gordon's friend stood off those curs. Bless my soul! I can shut my eyes and look on the whole thing yet. I never saw such a fire-eater in action, and yet in repose Joe is as meek as a lamb.

“After that I froze to him. We saw some weeks in company—weeks I have never forgotten, because I loved that man. Then I was ordered to watch the Italian operations about Abyssinia, while Joe went to find Chinese Gordon. I lost track of him, but have never ceased to feel the deepest interest in his work, as an explorer second only to Stanley and Emin Pasha. Now you can understand my intense delight upon hearing that the man we are going to see is no other than my comrade in Alexandria, Mynheer Joe.”

This is about the longest consecutive narrative



Mr. Grimes has ever heard Sandy give utterance to, which marks the power of that magical name. On his part, the silver king does not prove so confiding. He speaks of the man who interests them both as though acquainted with his past; but whether he has ever personally met him, Sandy finds it impossible to say.

Meanwhile, they have been making progress in the direction of the river. A light of some sort is positively needed in these streets after nightfall, moon or no moon, on account of the peculiar custom of building.

The houses, as a general rule, are three stories in height. As the street itself is but an alley, barely ten feet in width, and each story of the houses projects beyond the one below, it is easy to shake hands from the neighboring roofs. Even this small space is often covered with mats, to keep out the garish light of day, which, reflected from the white walls, dazzles the eyes.

In these narrow streets, men stand in groups engaged in discussion or barter, now and then gently pushed aside by the nose of some camel advancing silently, the "ship of the desert" being, besides the donkey, the only burden-bearer allowed in the native section.

Here and there a light is seen moving along, as some sheik proceeds homeward; but, as a general thing, darkness hangs over the street. In many of the houses, no doubt, gayety abounds; but Arab and Moor believe in keeping their homes sacred from the public, and only huge piles of whitened bricks lie on every side.



As yet they have met with no adventure, and the distance between the grand square and the river has been diminished by half. This savors of rare good luck, for it is not always that a Frank can traverse this region, at such an hour, unmolested.

Cairo abounds in rascals who do not fear the English law, however much they may respect the native *koorbash* and stocks. It is not a sin or a crime to rob a foreigner—unless caught in the act. That is the way they look at it.

Sandy knows this, if his companion does not happen to be so thoroughly posted with regard to the customs of the city on the Nile. He continues to keep his eyes about him, and does not let the Arab who carries the flambeau get beyond his reach, knowing that in all probability in case of an attack the first act of the dusky rascal will be to fly and leave them in darkness to meet the foe. They have even cut down the distance to a fourth and soon the light will fall upon the waters of the river, when the war correspondent bends suddenly forward and snatches the torch from the hand of the astonished bearer.







## CHAPTER II.

### THE MAN WHO SAW BRAVE GORDON FALL.

Mr. Grimes sees the action and does not appear to be at all surprised—indeed, he rarely deviates from the steady repose that marks him as a wonderfully nervy man.

Something glistens in his hand—it is a revolver, and the light gives the blue steel a cruel as well as a cold look. Evidently the stout tourist is ready to take care of himself.

Sandy has clutched the torch, which he at once raises above his head. Half a dozen ragged forms have sprung into view beyond. Perhaps some arch has secreted them until now. There can be no mistaking their intentions, for quickly they advance, spreading out as if to prevent the Franks, who have thus wandered into their net, from escaping.

“*Backsheesh !*” they clatter like a lot of monkeys, holding out begrimed hands and scowling.

There is only one way to treat these rascals—if you comply with their demands they grow more and more importunate, until they finally proceed to openly rob their victim.



"Stand back!" cries Sandy with a roar, as he swings the flambeau around his head.

They understand enough English to know what he is saying—at any rate, his actions are doubly significant—but, believing they can rule the ranch by mere force of numbers, the ragged beggars continue to push forward, thus hemming the two whites in.

Although small in point of stature, Sandy is a warrior, every inch of him, and, as might be expected from his nervous manner, possessed of an inflammable temper. When the nearest of the rogues pushes within reaching distance and clutches at him with bony fingers, the newspaper-man brings the flaming torch, with a resounding thump, against the top of the beggar's head. It does not affect the link, beyond sending forth a shower of sparks, but the unfortunate recipient of the blow, finding sparks in his long hair, utters vociferous shouts and dances with the fervor of a dervish.

This is deemed a signal for a general assault all along the line, and for the space of sixty seconds there is seen a spectacle rarely equaled in the narrow streets of old Cairo.

At first, the two foreigners are averse to using their firearms, and endeavor to inspire terror in the breasts of their enemies by a generous exhibition of muscle.

When Sandy has to dodge a fiendish blow from a wicked dagger, he thinks it about-time they proceeded to sterner measures.

Sandy opens on the rag-tag-and-bobtail crowd, as he terms them, seeking to inflict wounds and



create a diversion. He is immediately backed up by his companion. His strong, white teeth hold fast to his cigar, and even as he lets drive at a dark-faced fellah who seeks to cleave him with an Algerian yataghan, the silver king puffs out a small cloud of smoke. Talk about coolness! Here you have it in a human iceberg. Sandy holds his breath while looking at this strange companion, and wonders whether he would show excitement in the heat of battle.

This sort of a reception is hardly to the liking of the cowardly curs who have appeared daring simply because their numbers gave them confidence.

At the first shot most of them began to glance over their shoulders. This is a sure sign of a desire to retreat. Then comes hotter work. Sandy no longer waits for them to come to him, but with his revolver in one hand and the flaming torch whirling about his head he leaps toward the footpads.

This is too much for them—they break and fly with cries of terror, some springing up the street while others go down in the direction of the river.

In a marvelously short space of time the street is empty save for one poor fellow, who, shot in the leg, is hopping off as fast as his good peg will carry him, calling on Mohammed to save him from the foreign tigers.

In any other city under the sun, such a commotion at dead of night would create an intense excitement. Not so in Cairo. The white walls shut them in, pierced by minute windows that allow little chance of street gazing. Those who hear the sounds of war are discreet enough to know that it



is none of their business, and that they will be better off away.

“Look out behind you, sir!” calls Sandy, and the silver king turns suddenly to cover a creeping figure that has advanced from a dark-arched doorway, whereupon the most piteous jargon is heard, and behold the suspected assassin turns out to be their torch-bearer, who, having witnessed the hot little affair from a place of security, is now crawling back to resume his interrupted duties.

They welcome him gladly, and Sandy relieves himself of the flambeau, glad to be rid of it. As there are no more footpads in view to give them battle, they again take up their line of march for the river, fortunately close at hand.

Mr. Grimes has had explicit directions from Mr. Tanner how to reach the boat, and a suspicion has already entered his head that the ambuscade into which they ran may have been arranged by the *reis* of the sailing craft to relieve his rich employer of superfluous wealth. These Arabs and natives are up to all manner of tricks to gain filthy lucre, and old travellers become so accustomed to teachery that they are surprised at nothing, and learn to depend upon themselves entirely.

He even mentions the fact, as it occurs to him, to Sandy, who declares there is a strong element of probability about it, and in the same breath swears that, if the occasion offers, he will sift the matter to the bottom and wring the neck of the wily old *reis* if such a course is necessary to extract the truth.

“The river!” calls out their guide in his native tongue; and the fact arouses the two men to new



interest, as they remember why they have come here.

A minute later and they stand upon the edge of the Nile. Just here the bank is high, and at this season of the year the water reaches its lowest stage to the south, though at Cairo there is always plenty.

Below them they can see lights upon numerous vessels, some anchored out in the river, others tied up at the docks. Voices, too, come over the water from the west—men are singing on some of the coasters that ascend the river from the Mediterranean. All the typical boats seen upon this great sea can be found on the lower Nile. Here are schooners, brigs, ships, men-of-war—the baggala, felucca, xebec, settee and even a patamer from India, while numerous smaller craft and dahabeahs suited to travel on the Nile dot the surface of the river by day, making a scene worth remembering.

Our two friends can discern nothing of this now since darkness rests like a pall over the water, relieved only by the riding lights and lamps on board the numerous craft. Their attention is directed at once to a point immediately below, where the gleam of several lights proclaims the presence of a boat.

As they advance, they make out the clean-cut model of a new dahabeah, and can see the dark-skinned Egyptian sailors squatted on deck forward, while aft, the cabin, painted snow-white, is easily distinguishable.

The boat is tied to a dilapidated dock, but, for some reason, is also anchored a dozen feet away. A long gang-plank leads from the shore on board.



Sandy orders the torch-bearer to lead the way, and in order to make sure of the fellow's attendance when they have need of his services again, neglects to pay him.

Thus they trip across the plank and reach the roof of the cabin, where the captain meets them—a man with grizzled beard, white turban and flowing robes. Upon his face Sandy reads a look of perplexity and disappointment, and from this moment he knows the truth—that they really owe their adventure to this *reis*, who, believing millionaire Tanner would come to the boat, arranged to have his pockets tapped while *en route*.

These captains all talk fairly good English, although their hatred for the foreigner seems to be an inherited quality. Outwardly they may appear jolly and as meek as lambs, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Sandy has a habit of pushing himself forward; not that he means to be rude, but it is a characteristic of his impetuous nature. To his credit be it said, the same thing urges him on in times of danger. He is always found in the van.

“This boat is the *Alice*?” he asks boldly.

The captain removes the stem of his long pipe from his mouth, and gravely nods his head in an affirmative way.

“We have come direct from Mr. Tanner, to whom you are engaged for the season.”

Another solemn nod.

“Unable to come himself, he has sent us to see the man you picked up on the Nile—a man who was once my friend.”



The native captain looks at him closely, as though mentally figuring just where he should place Sandy. Then he smiles blandly and holds out his hand.

"If his friend, then mine. I have suffered at the hands of El Mahdi, and he who is an enemy to the False Prophet is my brother. Shake!"

Sandy complies, and gives the old *reis* such a Freemason grip that it wrings a groan from the dark-skinned owner of the dahabeah *Alice*.

"Now lead us to your guest. We are in haste," he says, with an assumption of authority that no one ventures to dispute; for, despite his lack of majestic proportions, the war correspondent has the air of one born to command. It is not stature that makes a leader like Napoleon.

"Follow, gentlemen," says the captain, with a majestic wave of his hand.

They obey willingly. The door of the cabin is close by. On either side are the steps leading to the promenade on the roof, over which an awning is stretched, for it is here that the tourist lives during the day, for the cabin, beginning amidships, extends to the stern. When the cabin-door is opened, they behold a splendid interior. Money has not been spared in fitting out the *Alice*, and only a millionaire like Tanner could engage such a lovely craft for the season.

A lamp is turned low, so that something of a dimness rests upon the interior, but the sharp eyes of Sandy have already discovered the figure of a man upon a divan.

"Enter, gentlemen," says the old *reis*.

Straight across the luxurious cabin strides the



newspaper correspondent direct to the lamp, which, with a turn, he causes to send forth a flood of light. Then he faces the recumbent figure on the couch; recumbent no longer, for as though the voice of the *reis* at the cabin-door has broken the chain of slumber which exhaustion has forged around him, the castaway of the Nile has raised his body with one arm and looks at them in a way that proclaims his bewilderment; the bright light dazzles his eyes, too, so that with his other hand he shades them.

It is a picture—Sandy, standing there, bending eagerly forward, his eyes glued upon the bearded face of the other, and actually holding his breath as he gazes spell-bound. The man who thus half raises himself upon the couch is worthy of a second look. His figure is splendidly proportioned, though not above the ordinary in point of size. It is the face that must interest an observer most of all—a face that is marked by determination, valor and frank fearlessness. This man has seen suffering in the past; he shows it in his eyes, and yet it has not crushed the spirit that leads the explorer to seek new honor and renown amid the dangers of unknown wilds, pestilential swamps or in the depths of an African desert.

Eye looks into eye as Sandy Barlow stands there; then the correspondent exclaims, with a ring of satisfaction in his voice:

“Mynheer Joe, for all the world!”

“Sandy, is it you, my dear fellow? Where under the sun did you drop from?” asks the other, holding out the hand that has been used to shield



his eyes from the light, though he does not alter his position one particle.

The correspondent seizes hold of the hand thus offered in greeting, his very enthusiasm showing what he feels at heart.

"Bless you, old boy, it's good for sore eyes to see you again, and looking as natural as ever. Never have I ceased to remember the days of 'auld lang syne,' when we two did the Nile in company. Talk about fate in our first meeting—it doesn't hold a candle to this! Same old grasp, same old Joe!" and he works the prodigal's arm like a pump-handle, while rattling along in this strain.

"Quartered in Cairo, Sandy—writing up the beauties of lower Egypt as a winter resort, or have you been appointed a consul here?" asks the other, with a jolly laugh that causes Mr. Grimes to wonder what stuff this man can be made of to be so composed and even merry after what he has gone through.

"That's not my luck. Still pegging away at the old business. Makes both ends meet and gives me a chance to see the world. But see here! Confound my stupidity! Here's a friend of yours waiting to meet you, and I've been monopolizing your time."

Mynheer Joe raises himself to a sitting posture and faces the silver king, who hesitates for a few seconds and then comes forward.

"Pardon me!" he says frankly. "You have made a mistake, Sandy. I did not claim to be a friend of Mynheer Joe, only a fellow-countryman, and one who has heard much about him and takes a



deep interest in his welfare. Obed Grimes, at your service, Mr. Miner."

The explorer possibly catches some significance back of his words. At any rate, he looks at the stout gentleman with the florid countenance as though intent upon studying out a problem; but noticing the outstretched hand, accepts it in his usual hearty way. Now and then, during the subsequent interview, while the correspondent plies him with questions, Mynheer Joe can be seen to keep a reflective eye upon Mr. Grimes. Perhaps he is endeavoring to place the wealthy miner; and yet the latter has declared they have not met before.

Sandy thinks only of one thing now. True, he has been especially pleased to meet with one he regards so highly; but this feeling has now given way to the instinct of his craft. He has been educated up to being a newspaper man above all else, and, like all others of his calling, has a keen nose for news. To be the first at the wire with startling information is the dream of Sandy Barlow's daily life.

Here he sees a golden opportunity for making a ten-strike. The whole civilized world hangs in suspense awaiting definite news of the heroic Chinese Gordon's fate. Rumors have been rife almost daily, sometimes detailing his death and again giving accounts of some wonderful victory over fifty thousand dervishes, as the followers of El Mahdi are called, his own force numbering but two thousand.

Like a shuttle-cock, dashed hither and yon by the



battledores, has this subject been kept on the go for weeks, and up to this black night in February no definite news has been received which settles Gordon's fate.

Thus Sandy's dreadful impatience is explained; the wide-awake correspondent is aroused to the exigencies of the hour, and for the benefit of the waiting civilized world would seize and send out an authentic account of the tragedy of ill-fated Khartoom.

Mechanically he draws out his note-book and, pencil in hand, prepares to take down in shorthand what may be said—a proceeding Mynheer Joe eyes with a smile.

“Pardon me, my friends, but I am almost starved. When I went to sleep, the captain here said he would have a meal ready for me when I awoke. I was hungry then, but could keep awake only long enough to take a cup of coffee and a bite. How is it, captain? Will you keep your word?”

The dusky Ben Hassan Effendi, nods and gives a signal with his hands. Immediately two fellahin appear. One carries a tray covered with a white napkin; the other lays a cloth upon the little round table. Almost like magic, a savory, steaming meal is thus placed in front of the hungry Mynheer Joe, after which the magician waves his hand, and his followers vanish as if into thin air.

“Your pardon, gentlemen. I have fasted for some days now, and the aroma arising from this spread is too much for me to withstand. Captain, how long have I slept?”



"Twenty-seven hours, gentlemen," gravely announces the old *reis*.

"Incredible!" exclaims Mr. Grimes.

"Eat, my boy! Jove! You may go to sleep again, unless you get your jaws working! I've heard of such things as people sleeping for days," cries Sandy, with an air that plainly marks the martyr, and says: "Don't consider me—I can wait."

So Mynheer Joe does ample justice to the meal set before him and, when ten minutes have passed, very little remains of what was brought in. At the same time something of the pinched look has left his face, and he seems more like the man Sandy remembers.

The correspondent has been surveying the interior of the cabin curiously, endeavoring to keep down the spirit of impatience that makes a minute seem an hour. He knows his friend has great need of all the sustenance he can secure at present, and hence will not allow his own selfish motives to triumph.

As he finishes his survey of the gay decorations upon the walls of the cabin, where scores of novelties add to the picturesque appearance of the scene, Sandy hears a sigh of deep satisfaction, and wheeling about is just in time to see the captain, at a signal from the pilgrim, clap his hands, when the two attendants dart in, removing the *debris*.

"Gentlemen—one favor. In the name of mercy, have either of you—a cigar?" asks the recent diner, in a tragic voice.

He has a choice weed in a second, and ere three pass, fire has been applied to it.



"Richard is himself again—first cigar in seven months—think of it," he says melodramatically.

"Now, my dear fellow, pardon my beastly haste, but after midnight I lose the wire. Can you tell me whether Gordon is dead or alive?"

Mynheer Joe drops his head suddenly, and something like a groan come from his lips.

"Gordon is dead," he replies, slowly, "with these eyes I saw him fall, and this right arm struck his murderer, cleaving him to the chin."







## CHAPTER III.

### THE TRAGEDY OF THE NILE.

At these words, both Americans look very grave, and even Ben Hassan, standing near by, seems as though appalled. Faith in the astonishing powers of Chinese Gordon has always given those who know him an idea that nothing could ever overcome him.

He was a man absolutely without fear, with a fine Christian character, respected everywhere by the natives, for his personality was something far beyond the ordinary. For six months and more, this valiant man has been shut up within the walls of Khartoom, with a few thousand miserable native troops facing fifty thousand dervishes of El Mahdi. Without the presence of Gordon, these troops would not hold out a day against the enemy.

There, with a few faithful officers and friends, he has held out from week to month, hurling back the legions of the False Prophet and holding the debatable ground against the slave-traders, waiting for the rescue that will come too late; for England, the more shame to her, being engaged in political discussions, delays sending a relief-column until it



becomes a necessity on account of the clamor of the people, which column will find Khartoom in the hands of the enemy, and Gordon—*lost*.

"This is sad news you bring, Joe," says the newspaper man, at length.

"Sad, yes; but true, too true. England has, by her vacillating policy, murdered the bravest of her sons. How blind the powers that be! This will topple over the ministry quicker than anything else on earth. The people loved Gordon because his motives were always honorable."

The man from Khartoom speaks quietly, as if he has long since learned to look upon the disaster with composure. He is not one given to emotion, at any rate, as a glance into his face would inform an observer.

"Tell us about it, Joe," bursts out the impetuous Sandy, note-book and pencil in hand.

The other passes one hand wearily across his brow, as though he would clear away the cobwebs time has spun about his brain.

"It is hardly a propitious time for entering into details, my friend. I am willing to speak, but I know you will pardon me if I simply sketch the matter lightly."

"Yes, yes, tell what you please, Joe."

Mr. Grimes and the *reis* say nothing; only moving a little closer to the messenger from Khartoom, in order to hear how Gordon fell. It is a subject which must interest the whole world. Millions will, later on, read the story of his desertion and death in that town on the Nile, and from every country under the sun will breathe curses against Old Eng-



land for the cowardly policy that has ended in this way.

“ You know what took Gordon to Khartoom and the sacred work to which he devoted his life. He was the deadly enemy of the slave-trader, and long ago declared that his life would be spent in endeavoring to break up that terrible trade on the upper Nile. The rattle of slave-chains was the most hated sound he knew, and it was this that made him hold on even when doom stared him in the face.

“ I know his mind, for I have talked with him day by day, and found Gordon a rock. He could a dozen times have saved himself by flight, but he would not desert his post. Heaven sent him there, and at Khartoom he would remain, the rock of Egypt, until the longed-for line of British troops appeared in view or doom came.

“ What we went through with during those months heaven alone knows. Day alter day we fought the black dervishes of the desert, and thousands laid down their lives in front of Khartoom's walls. Now it was a sally ; anon, an attack. We might have even won on a certain occasion but for the treachery of certain leaders. Gordon tried them later, and all were shot. He would not stand insubordination.

“ Thus months passed. We endured all that can come during that pestilential season from July, when the city was invested. The weeks passed us by in a way that was maddening. Our eyes were strained looking for the succor that never came. Through it all Gordon was the same man I have ever known him, cheerful, sober and never faltering.



If it was his fate to die at his post, death would find him ready.

“I shall never, while I have breath, cease to remember that man with all the wonder and admiration my soul can express. God never made a human being more in the mold of a hero than when he gave us Gordon. The world will keep his memory green forever.

“Thus, as the months passed away, our stores grew low, and a spirit of discontent arose. Money was scarce, and the soldiers were in a state of constant irritation bordering on frenzy. Mutiny would long since have broken out but for the astonishing power this man seemed to have over his subjects. I marveled at it then, and it will never cease to be a source of wonder to me.

“At last came the fatal hour when this magnetism could no longer hold the fragments of his little army together. I knew it was coming as well as I knew anything. Signs pointed to it from all quarters, and each morning as the sun arose in the east I wondered whether it would ever be my good fortune to look on its setting again.

“Gordon never despaired of a rescue. He had no doubt prepared for the worst, but his faith in the ultimate coming of his comrades was sublime. ‘They will come to-morrow,’ he would say each night as the darkness settled about us, and deep down in my heart I firmly believed that to-morrow would never arrive.

“Thus the days moved along, each sun showing new difficulties that at its setting Gordon had managed to smooth over in a way that was simply



marvelous ; but each time I noticed that things looked worse, and it was only a question of how long it would be ere certain matters came into conjunction, and bore us under. What I most dreaded was a mutiny during one of the enemy's fierce assaults. Should a portion of our troops turn upon us, even the fierce ardor of the Bashi Bazouks who remained faithful could not keep Gordon's life sacred.

"My fears proved to be well grounded, as you shall soon see. It happened on the 26th day of January, and that should be a day of mourning for all time to come in England.

"Gordon came from his room that morning as cheerful as was his wont, and ready to meet the duties of the day, whatever Heaven might send him. The storm was gathering, but his presence had chased away the clouds so often that all of us had come to believe him as invincible.

"We knew the enemy was about to make a desperate assault, but, we had hurled them back from the walls of Khartoom so often, in bleeding masses, that we did not doubt our ability to do the same thing again, although ammunition was beginning to grow scarce.

"I have since come to the conclusion that during the night of the 25th some arrangement must have been made between our native troops and the sheiks who led the hordes of the Prophet. Certainly, the events of the day justified such a conclusion.

"Gordon, as usual, assembled his leaders and harangued them. Up to now, he had never once failed to impart some of his own enthusiasm to



those in charge of his men, so that they went to their several stations inspired to fight like heroes in the cause of this magnetic man.

“With wonder and uneasiness I saw that his words on this morning appeared to fall upon deaf ears. The dark faces grew moody. As it happened, I was the only white man close by, though I could hear some of his officers giving orders near the governor’s house.

“One man threw the spark that exploded the magazine. He dared answer Gordon back and tell him it would be best to give up Khartoom while El Mahdi was willing to let them depart in peace, since the doom of the city was a settled thing, anyhow.

“The general’s face flamed up as he heard this cowardly plea. I can see him now, as in scathing terms he rebuked the officer. The man hung his head. I expected to see him fall on his knees and beg for pardon.

“My attention was drawn from him for just a few seconds, while I swept my eyes around to see how the others were taking it. I found that they, too, scowled and looked ugly.

“Then I heard a shot just beside me. With a horror I can’t explain, I whirled around, to see the black devil of a traitor aiming a revolver, from the muzzle of which smoke still curled. General Gordon had his hand pressed to his heart, and I could see the blood trickling over his fingers. That sight will haunt me all my life ! I who have seen many strange and terrible things in my time can never forget what happened on that awful 26th day of January.



“ I knew the brave Gordon had received his death-wound at the hands of one who had even fought at his side, and the consciousness that the evil hour had come seemed to turn my very blood into molten lava.

“ Fearful sounds arose all over Khartoom, for the signal had been given that was to indicate Gordon’s downfall. The enemy assaulted the walls, a portion of the late defenders joined them, and Khartoom became the scene of a massacre too terrible for words.

“ I assure you, my friends, I did not stand idle while all this was going on. No sooner did I see the falling hero at my side, when, quick as the lightning leaves the clouds, my sword leaped from its scabbard. Giving a true Yankee yell, I sprang at the assassin. The descending blade cleft his miserable skull to the chin, and through all time I shall never cease to rejoice that it was the arm of an American avenged Gordon’s death.

“ What happened after that is more like a dream than a reality to me, but I shall give it for what it is worth. I remember plunging into the thick of the fight. All around me arose the most fearful sounds of a desperate battle, while through Khartoom rang the shrieks of poor women and the shouts of exulting demons ; for the black horde had swarmed over the walls, and, in their great fury, seemed to spare none.

“ More than one went down before my sword and revolvers ; for, expecting only death, I fought as a madman might.

“ In the midst of the *mêlée*, covered with grime



and blood, I could hardly be distinguished from one of the traitor-soldiers who had at last turned upon their general. Suddenly my body was clasped by a pair of arms from behind, and I found myself hurled to the ground.

“Naturally I expected instant death, when, to my surprise, a voice called in my ear :

“ ‘Feign death! I would save the sahib!’

“It was my faithful servant Kasse, whom I had brought from Bombay. I hardly know why I obeyed him; it must have been because I had so little power to resist, for life did not seem worth any trouble just then.

“He dragged me into a house that overlooked the river and there secreted me. All through the day I heard the shouts of the victorious hordes as they thronged through Khartoom. Something had come into my mind, and I found that I had an object to live for, a mission to perform. The news of Gordon’s death must be carried to his people, and I had come to the conclusion that of all the faithful within the walls of Khartoom, Joe Miner was the only living soul that remained.

Night came, and faithful Kasse made his appearance. He had disguised himself as one of the enemy, and thus escaped the common fate that befell the defenders of the city.

“From him I learned that a clever scheme had been arranged whereby we could make our escape down the river. The water was very low, but Gordon had several small, light-draught steamers for use upon the upper-waters of the Nile. One of these



lay not more than a stone's throw down the river, tied to the bank.

"Kassee's bright plan was for us to drop into the river from the back of the house, wade down to the boat, climb aboard and, aided by the darkness, cast her adrift. When some distance down the river, we could light a fire, start up steam and, as soon as daylight came, make good progress north.

"There was something fascinating about the adventure, particularly as it promised to be our only chance.

"Acting under the instructions of my faithful Kassee I clambered through the slit of a window in the mud wall of the house, lowered myself by means of the convenient rope, and finally stood knee-deep in the waters of the Nile below, waiting.

"When the ex-sepoy joined me," continued Mynheer Joe, "we began to creep along down in the direction of the little steamer. It was guarded, but Kassee knew where the sentry was posted, and he attended to his case while I got ready to unfasten the ropes.

"I heard a single splash, but not a cry. Then Kassee came to me and declared everything was working all right. We pushed out into the stream and began to leave the doomed city behind. As yet discovery had not come.

"I will not dwell on this part of my trip. In the morning we got up steam and began to make good headway.

"Until half-way to the Second Cataract we were not molested. Then a troop of scouting followers



of the Mahdi sighted us and riding into the river attempted to take the steamer.

“We had prepared for this. There was a small cannon on board, which we kept in readiness for just such an emergency as this; and when we sent its contents into the midst of the black rascals they scattered to the winds.

“Below, we had another fight, and this time they very nearly took the vessel; but our fire was a trifle too warm, and they finally allowed us to go on.

“As we drew near the cataract, we knew we would have to abandon the little steamer; but we had determined to continue the voyage in her light yawl, which could be carried around the cataract by two stout men.

“This was finally done and we kept on down the river. Fortune had been kind until now. We ran upon some hippopotami, and in a rage one of the monsters crushed our boat. It was in the night. I believe my poor Kasee must have fallen a victim to the savage beasts, for I saw him no more.

“My own escape was very miraculous. I landed a mile down the stream. At break of day I pushed on. Fate threw me in with a native, who carried me as far as the First Cataract in his boat. Here I met an English hunter, a bold fellow who, with some guides, had been up the river shooting river-horses, as he called the hippopotami.

“He was horrified at my news, and gladly gave me a place in his comfortable boat, after which we set out for Cairo, hundreds of miles away.

“All went well until we were about two days' run above the city, when a sudden squall took us



unawares; the boat capsized, and I found myself wrecked again in the darkness.

“ I spent weary hours clinging to the hatch which had somehow come under my hands. Several times boats came near me in the morning, but no one would take me off. They pretended not to hear me; in fact, I might as well have been a thousand miles away, for all they noticed me. You see, they have a dread of being held as witnesses, and, if part of a boat’s crew is lost, there must be a legal inquiry, which will compel them to be in town and lose time from their work.

“ As the day was passing, I felt that I must leave my raft and try to gain the distant shore, where the railroad ran, unless soon rescued. Just then, this boat came down the river, running close by. I called to the captain, telling him I was from Khar-toom, with news of Gordon; he at once put about and came to my rescue. The rest you already know, friends.”

Thus Mynheer Joe finishes his story. It has not taken a great while to tell the facts, but volumes could be filled with the details. He endeavors to control himself when speaking of Gordon’s death, but it is evident that event has made a powerful impression on the sturdy explorer, who so often has fought side by side with the Christian hero.

Sandy has ceased making his hieroglyphics upon the pages of his note-book. His face beams with enthusiasm at the thought of being first with this authentic account of Gordon’s death. At the same time, out of respect for the feelings of Mynheer Joe, he endeavors to subdue this mark of journalistic



pride and appear sober, but it is really beyond him.

As for Mr. Grimes, he has observed the narrator with deep interest all the while he tells of the strange things which happened to him. Whatever is passing in the mind of the silver king, he does not allow it to be shown upon his face, which is as expressionless as that of the Sphinx.

The messenger from Khartoom sits there for a brief interval, with that look of sadness on his face, as though the thoughts surging through his mind have been too much for him.

"Come, rouse yourself, my boy! You are among friends at last, thank Heaven, and will be the lion of Cairo when it is publicly known that you were with gallant Gordon when he fell," says Sandy, but the other holds up his hand, and says quietly :

"That is a distinction I do not crave. Somehow I feel guilty in not leaving my body beside Gordon. At best, I see nothing to boast of in having escaped his fate."

"The brave are ever modest," says Sandy. "At least, you will make a report to the proper officials to-morrow and verify my dispatches?"

"Yes, a very brief one. That is only just. I would, for certain reasons of my own which you cannot understand, keep it as quiet as possible."

"Just so!" remarks the silver king, in such a peculiar way that Mynheer Joe glances at him, and then finds his attention caught by a photograph on the wall, which he sees for the first time.

"That face again! Whose picture have we here?" he demands, with an alarming interest.





## CHAPTER IV.

"I KNOW HIM AS MYNHEER JOE."

Sandy turns his head and sees what has attracted the explorer's attention. He smiles, too, for the words of Mynheer Joe would indicate that this is not the first time his eyes have rested on the picture or its original.

"That is the daughter of the gentleman who hires the dahabeah upon which we are just now," returns the war correspondent.

"Name?" asks Joe.

"Demosthenes Tanner."

"Can it be possible!"

"That is her father, of course. The girl—"

"Stupid! It was her name I asked for."

"Ah, I see. She is called Molly," replies Sandy, with a wink in the direction of Mr. Grimes, who is, however, too deeply interested in watching Mynheer Joe's face to notice aught else. He seems to be not a little fascinated by something in connection with the other.

"Molly? A pretty name. Somehow it just seems to fit those features. Molly Tanner is it?"



Good! I will remember. What a strange freak of fate that I should be picked up by her father's boat, of all on the river!"

Mynheer Joe is muttering to himself, as though indulging in some reminiscence of the past; a slight smile has appeared upon his rather worn and haggard though always striking face. Evidently the thoughts that slip into his mind are pleasant ones.

It is not in the nature of Sandy Barlow to let a comrade enjoy a secret alone. Not that he has any desire to be meddlesome, but he wishes to share the joys as well as the sorrows of those in whose company he travels life's highway. Hence he nods his wise little head sagely, and, cocking it on one side in a manner peculiar to himself, remarks:

"I say, Joe, this isn't the first time that face has flashed before your enchanted vision? Own up, now, like a man. We're all in love with the divine Molly; every single man in Cairo at this hour yearns for her smiles, and you'll be only one of scores. Speak up, man: Where did you ever meet her? I've never heard her mention your name, to my knowledge, and, by Jove, she thought you were a Dutchman, when she sent me down here! Leave it to Grimes if it ain't so."

Mynheer Joe smiles.

"For once, friend Sandy, you have hit the bull's-eye. I have met this lady before."

"And still she does not recognize your name—that by which the whole world of scientific geographers has learned to call you? When she spoke of Mynheer Joe, she showed no emotion; and, as I said before, told us to do all for the poor unfortu-



nate German we could. She even wanted to come herself to hear of Gordon. He's her hero, you know, as he is of many thousands. Yes, and we had even to promise to bring you back with us. So, what do you say to that?"

"I suppose I shall have to go. A woman's will is law, generally, especially one whose face is as charming as that photo betrays."

"But, your former meeting?" hammers the man of pencil and note-book, who does not deviate from a course he may have marked out, and, as a consequence, generally gets there with both feet.

"Ah, you will have it, Sandy," laughs the other.

"Why not? There is something eccentric about it, I'll be bound. You didn't meet Molly in the ordinary orthodox way, or you'd know her name, while she could never forget yours."

"Well, you see, it's a poor place to ask for a name when salt water is running into mouth and eyes," returns Mynheer Joe.

The correspondent appears to have received a tremendous shock, for suddenly springing to his feet, he clutches the explorer by the arm to whirl him around so that he may look in his face.

"Confusion! Were you the hero of that little episode at Malta a year ago?" he demands.

"I don't know about being a hero, but I did have the extreme pleasure of jumping from my sail-boat and saving, from a watery grave, a young girl who had fallen overboard from a boat that nearly upset in a squall," returns the man from Khartoom, modestly.

Mr. Grimes puckers up his lips as if to whistle,



and his whole manner says: "So, that's the way the wind blows, is it—in truth, coming events cast a shadow before."

As for Sandy he shrugs his shoulders and pretends to look dreadfully disappointed, though there is a twinkle in his eye that tells of a sly humor. You cannot always take Sandy as he appears. He has often turned out to be a sly rogue.

"And then you sailed away without even leaving your name, nor has the young lady ever been able to learn who it was so gallantly jumped overboard after her. One thing is settled—you've got a clear road there, Joe. Not another man will have a chance when once Molly recognizes you as her preserver."

Instead of looking flattered the party addressed has something of a bored appearance. A man who has devoted his life to science and exploration has no business to fall in love. His heart is supposed to be wrapped up in his work.

"Don't mention it, Sandy, I beg. I was bound upon a very curious errand at the time and didn't mean to be rude, but time was money. I could spend five minutes saving a girl's life but deliver me from an hour of thanks from her relatives. When I got back to Malta they had gone."

"But you will come with us now—that is, if you feel able?" asks Sandy, who, having nobly given up all his chances of winning the prize—they were about equal to one grain of sand in comparison with the sea-shore—desires to bring the conquering hero to his fate.

"I feel like a new man. That meal was the first



decent one I've enjoyed for months. While the men lived on coarse food, Gordon would not allow the officers to feast. One thing, however, may prevent me from going with you."

"What's that?" ask both the others.

"My clothes are in a dilapidated condition. See, here a yataghan cut a piece out entirely; it would have taken my leg, also, if better aimed. Then there are other slits and jagged openings. I don't remember where they came from, so I must have received them during the engagement. A few trifling wounds under them have healed up, and I am feeling very well, thank you. In day-time, I can draw money from the bank here in Cairo and buy what I need. Meantime, you will have to excuse me to the young lady."

"Hang me if I will! We'll find some other means of reaching the same result," cries Sandy, who is a great hand for surmounting obstacles.

Mr. Grimes here puts in his oar in the quiet way he has. Stepping up, he places himself alongside the intrepid explorer.

"Just about one size, I believe," he remarks.

"Yes, it is so," says Sandy, with a chuckle, for he has always had the reputation of being able to see through a grindstone with a hole in the center.

"Then consider the matter settled. The gentleman will accompany us to Shepherd's; he will go with me to my room and select from several traveling-suits I keep on hand."

"But this is too much—"

"I never accept a refusal, Mynheer Joe; so look



upon it as arranged," with a wave of the hand that a prince might envy.

The explorer looks at him curiously for a few seconds, and then gives in.

"I thank you, sir. I will accept the loan until morning comes and the bazaars open."

"Good," ejaculated the newspaper man. "And now let's be tramping back to the hotel. Left the beggar with the light on deck. Hope he hasn't been tossed into the Nile. Glad to see you meet Molly. Hanged if I wouldn't! Then I've got an hours work making up and sending my dispatch. I fancy one man in Cairo will want to cut his throat in the morning. 'T isn't often the *Herald* gets left."

He is all excitement, and there is no need of further delay. Mynheer Joe turns to the *reis*.

"Ben Hassan Effendi, I shall remember your kindness always," he says, taking the brown hand of the old captain.

"I am already repaid. I hate El Mahdi. You were his enemy. It pleases me to help one who did him injury. Kismet! It is fate," says the Arab.

"On the morrow, if by chance you see my faithful Kasseer come floating down the river on a raft, send him to Shepherd's Hotel. You will know him from his voice. It is like the whistle of a locomotive."

"But you said he was drowned!" cries Sandy. "I have it down so in black and white."

"I trust you may have to alter it, for somehow I can't force myself to believe him as one dead. Now I am ready, gentlemen."

They pass out of the cabin and reach the deck of the dahabeah, where the link-boy is found in con-



versation with the crew, the members of which are naturally curious to discover all they can about the stranger they picked up in the river, who cried out that he was from Khartoom before Ben Hassan could rescue him. They might as well question one of Cairo's four hundred mosques as this lad. He can and does tell them about the gallant fight made by the two Franks when assailed by the mob of beggars in the street, but knows nothing of their relations to the guest of the *reis*.

The flambeau-bearer goes ahead, and, one by one, the others walk the narrow plank that stretches from the roof of the cabin to the bank. When all are safely landed, they strike off through the same street where their previous engagement took place. Evidently these men are not made of material to shrink from any hidden danger. If the rascals who lay in wait for them before choose to try conclusions a second time, doubtless they will find means to accommodate them.

They are not molested while *en route*. Once or twice they see shadowy figures glide from dark arches ahead and vanish in the gloom, who, in all probability, belong to the same gang with which they had their former adventure; but the fellows have received too severe a lesson to think of enduring such rough handling a second time.

Presently, the lights of the grand square flame up beyond. Here, at least, darkness does not hold sway over the old city of Cairo. The various sounds that greet the ear in this quarter are, indeed, refreshing after experiencing the dead hush that hangs over the main city, although hitherto Sandy



and the silver king have been rather inclined to consider all the clap-trap a bore. Comparisons may be odious, but they open the eyes to a true appreciation of things.

Generally speaking, it is the traveller who has broad views of life and the stay-at-home whose ideas are as narrow as the little world his eyes daily rest upon.

Passing through the square, the little party, having dismissed their light-bearer, draw up at Shepherd's Hotel. Here, as usual, there are scenes of gayety; it is the central attraction of the whole plaza. Lights gleam, voices are heard, laughter and music float upon the balmy air. Men throng certain points, smoking and chatting, while others engage in dancing; for on this night in February the hotel has given a "hop."

Sandy knows and appreciates the desire of his friend to be observed as little as possible, and he manages it so that they pass into the hotel without undergoing a critical survey. Indeed, the condition of Mynheer Joe is hardly such as would warrant him appearing in the presence of ladies. Naturally his figure is good, and he makes a fine appearance, but just now his clothing, as he has shown them, has been badly cut in the awful affair at Khartoom and from his frequent immersions in the river shrunk so that it clings to him like a friend and a brother. Yes, Mynheer Joe is hardly in a condition to meet the fair girl whose face he has carried in his memory ever since saving her life at Malta. A man dislikes appearing as a scarecrow before one whose good opinion he values. No doubt there



have been occasions when lovers have thus been forced into the presence of their sweethearts.

During the War, a Yankee school-teacher in Tennessee was tarred and feathered by the sympathizers of the South, and in this condition appeared before the girl he afterward married. Mynheer Joe can appreciate his feelings without any desire to duplicate his dilemma.

"Now, Mr. Grimes, bring him back to this spot as soon as you can," says Sandy, seating himself at a desk where he may handle pen and paper.

They leave him there, busily engaged in writing out in "long hand" the narrative of Khartoom's fall and the death of Gordon, which he took down in short-hand as the story fell from the lips of the one survivor of that terrible day.

Mr. Grimes himself leads the way to his room, which is one of the best Shepherd's affords. Here the traveller finds a hotel run much more on the American plan than most caravansaries in European or other foreign countries. Even in Alexandria the guest is charged for a candle, for a piece of soap, for the most trivial service in fact. It becomes an abominable nuisance. No wonder then that Shepherd's is always a favorite stopping-place for all our citizens "doing" the wonderful country of the Nile.

Mr. Grimes fastens his door, and then with true hospitality begins to spread the contents of his trunk before Mynheer Joe.

"Choose anything you please, my friend. I am only too happy to be at your service," says the



silver king, blandly, and the messenger from Khar-toom takes him at his word.

He makes his ablutions, assumes a modest check-suit that fits him remarkably well, combs his hair and beard, and in a brief space of time has effected a wonderful change in his appearance. Then it can be seen that this nomad, who has wandered all over the earth with such men as Stanley, Schwatka and other adventurous spirits, is about as fine-looking a man as one would meet in a month in London or New York.

He is as brown as a berry, from exposure to the hot sun and peculiar winds of Egypt; but that is the common fate of all who dwell beneath the sky of the tropics. Besides, most women admire a bronzed warrior, when compared with the pink-and-white city dandy. Strength and valor are qualities that appeal to their fancy.

When Mynheer Joe announces his toilet as completed, Mr. Grimes, who has been glancing over a paper he picked up, looks at his guest. The expression on his face declares that he is pleased, and that there is no danger that the explorer may not be fit to meet the finest ladies in the land.

Mr. Grimes seems to take a peculiar interest in this *protégé* of his. He watches him when one would not think he is looking, and there is a gleam in his eyes that might mean a good many different things.

"If you are ready, we will go down," he remarks, tossing his paper aside.

The other assents, and together they descend to the parlors of the hotel. There Mr. Grimes leaves



him in a small room alone while he goes to hunt up Sandy.

Mynheer Joe stands there, observing some attraction seen from the window. The rustle of a dress causes him to turn. A lady has glided into the room; her hand is outstretched, and, remembering the delicate feather fan he noticed upon the table, he noticed her motive in thus entering the *bijou* parlor.

As he thus turns, she unconsciously looks up at him; their eyes meet, and they are only some four feet apart.

Mynheer Joe starts, and the young girl utters a low, sharp cry, while over her face there flashes a look of sudden pleasure. She comes even closer; the hand that was outstretched to pick up the fan now rests upon his arm, while her gray eyes hold his own spellbound.

"At last," she breathes, "we meet. I have not forgotten you, sir, if you were ungallant enough to run away before I could thank you. Perhaps even now you think me rude—you do not remember me?"

"You are Molly Tanner," he says, slowly, his eyes still upon her face.

"Ah! You even know my name, and all this while I have had no chance to thank you for saving my life."

She brings a shade of reproach into her voice; and he says quickly:

"If you knew all, you would not blame me. I was compelled to hurry away. At the first opportunity I returned, but only to learn that the Amer-



ican traveller and his daughter had left Malta. Until to-night I did not know your name."

"If it is a year late, you will shake hands with me? You will allow me to thank you for your noble deed?"

"The first, willingly," as he takes her little hand in his and smiles at the contrast; "but I would prefer that you said nothing about the other. It was my duty to jump overboard; a man would be a coward not to do it; and, besides, I am more than half amphibious, anyhow. The water has no terrors for me."

"Have you been here in Cairo long?" she asks.

And a puzzled look crosses his face; for up to now he has supposed that Sandy sent her in to him.

"I only arrived to-night," he smiles.

"Ah, I wondered how I could have missed seeing you. In Cairo Europeans and Americans are not so plentiful but that their paths cross before long. Are you—English?" with a glance up at his bronzed face.

"I was born in Philadelphia."

"Indeed!"

"My family come of the old Pennsylvania Dutch stock, of which I am very proud."

"Any one from America, as they call the States abroad, should be proud of his country. I am enthusiastic on the subject, and yet strange as it may seem, my heart is set upon travel—I long to see all parts of the world. If the poor old governor had his way he would be back again in Chicago, managing his business, but I shall give him no rest until I



have seen India first of all, then China and Japan; and at last Russia, if the dear man can hold out."

Mynheer Joe looks pleased to hear her talk, for as his own heart is set upon travel and discovery he feels as though this must ever be a bond between them. At the same time in imagination he can see the dear little "governor" she speaks of, a mild body, living only to humor this one child of his old age, Joe has the old gentleman's picture down in his mind to a dot, and he is sure he can pick him out in a crowd.

Before he can say what is on his mind their *tête-à-tête* is interrupted. Voices are heard just beyond the *portière* at the door, and the man recognizes them.

"I left him in here," says the silver king.

The curtain moves, is tossed impatiently aside, and Sandy Barlow enters.

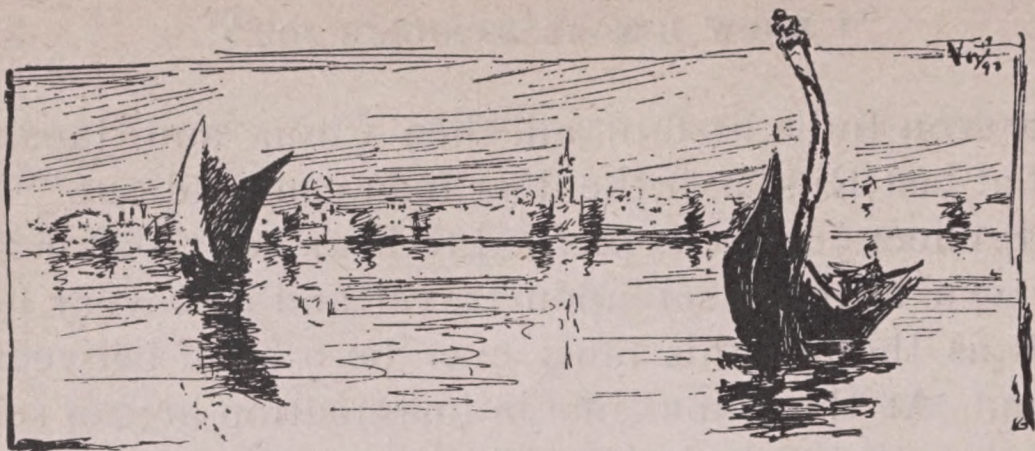
"Ah, here he is! Couldn't find her anywhere. Great Cæsar! Look here, Grimes, you see fate is stronger than you and I together!"

The young girl laughs softly.

"I have by accident run across the gentleman who so bravely saved my life at Malta. He has not seen fit to give me his name as yet. Perhaps you, as his friend, wouldn't mind informing me," she says, rapidly.

"I know him as Mynheer Joe," laughs Sandy, "the poor Dutchman rescued by your captain from the waters of the Nile."





## CHAPTER V.

"IF YOU MUST FIGHT, TAKE A MAN OF YOUR SIZE!"

The fair Molly is taken aback by this intelligence—her face shows it; but she is not the one to remain long in such a condition of mind, and her clear laugh serves to brush away the mist that seems to be gathering over the little company.

"This is indeed a pleasure—a peculiar coincidence—you saved me, and one in our employ rescues you from the water," she says.

"Kismet! It is fate," groans Sandy, but they pretend not to understand him, though his meaning is as plain as daylight.

"You will forgive me for speaking of you as the poor German castaway—the peculiar name led me astray?" she goes on, just as if she and Joe were alone in the *bijou* parlor.

"It is natural—I am used to it. Behold the effect of having a nickname saddled on to one in boyhood. It has followed me everywhere. A waggish com-



panion corrupted the name of 'Miner' into 'Mynheer' and tacked 'Joe' to it. Long ago I gave up in despair the attempt to live the name down. 'Mynheer Joe' it will be to the end of the chapter."

There is an oddity about it that strikes her as singularly pleasant. All her gentleman-friends are "Mr." or "Colonel" or the "Hon." This or That. Mynheer Joe stands out alone. It has an individuality that marks it above all others.

"And you are the messenger from Khartoom? You come with news of General Gordon?" she continues.

"Yes," he replies simply.

"When did you last see him?"

"On the 26th day of January."

"As long ago as that? But I forget what a tremendous distance Khartoom is away. How glad the whole civilized world will be to hear from him!" Mynheer Joe bites his lips, but says nothing yet. "The people love him so! I have always hoped to meet him, of all men, if ever I visited Egypt; and just to think he has talked with you, eaten with you, even fought at your side!"

"And died as close to me as you are standing at this moment, Miss Tanner."

"Dead! Gordon dead?" she whispers, aghast.

"It is even so," he replies sadly.

"Can it be possible? Oh, how terrible it is to believe that grand man is no more! What a shock it will cause wherever the telegraph can carry it!" she murmurs.

"That reminds me," exclaims Sandy, with a hasty glance at his watch, "that I have business before



me. You will excuse my haste." And, with a parting salute, he vanishes.

Mr. Grimes is the only one who notices his departure, for the others are too interested in what is passing.

"And you saw him fall? You won't mind telling me the sad story?" Miss Tanner pleads.

"If you will be seated, I will relate it just as I have to Sandy. In the morning all the world will know the facts. Surely, there have been rumors concerning this thing?"

"Yes, but people refused to believe them. They came from untrustworthy sources, and were hardly in before contradictions came after. We have all been waiting for positive truth. It comes at last with you. Now tell me, you who were with Gordon, how he fell."

Mr. Grimes finds himself a nonentity, and, with a smile, betakes himself from the *bijou* parlor back of the *portière*. True, he has no cablegram to send *just yet*, but he fancies he may make use of the wires later on, in connection with private business. At present he can amuse himself watching the bright scene in and before Shepherd's, and speculating upon the strange vicissitudes of fortune that one day have a man in rags and the next elevate him to a princely income. Mr. Grimes is nothing if not a philosopher.

The two left in the cozy little parlor do not miss the silver king at all, so wrapped up is Mynheer Joe in his companion, and so deeply interested does Molly become in his narrative.

He tells it modestly, for this man can never boast



of his own exploits. At the same time, he is by force of circumstances compelled to give facts, and Molly is at liberty to draw her own conclusions. As she already has a high opinion of Mynheer Joe, she is apt to make a liberal judge.

How her eyes kindle as she sits there, spellbound, listening to the story of Gordon's death! It is a tale to thrill the pulses of all who admire a brave, generous heart, devoted to the good of his fellow-men. Molly hardly seems to breathe as she drinks in his words. This man, in her eyes, is also a hero ten times over. Even had it not been his arm that plucked her out of the cruel Mediterranean at Malta, still would she accord him this exalted position. For has he not been with Gordon, and does not the reflected light of that great chieftain fall upon him? The man whose sword avenged the death of Chinese Gordon can never be aught else but a hero in her eyes.

It takes some time to tell all, for Mynheer Joe rather enjoys this *tête-à-tête* with the girl who has become the belle of European Cairo. Even when he rapidly sketches his late trip upon the Nile, and brings the story to a conclusion, she has many questions to ask that are right to the point, and which, upon being answered, bring the situation out in a clearer light.

Then Mr. Grimes—considerate Mr. Grimes—who believes he has left them alone long enough, makes his appearance. There does not seem to be any particular necessity for his coming, but he evinces an interest in the explorer that no person has ever seen him show for any one else. Sandy finds them



still together when he returns after sending his wonderful dispatch—the great dispatch that will be the sensation of the day in London and America. Flushed with success, he appears before them and mechanically glances at his watch—a villainous habit he has upon every occasion.

The action catches Molly's eye, and with a little feminine scream she snatches out her own minute time-piece, studded with diamonds, and looks at the tell-tale face, in consternation.

“Eleven o'clock! An hour and a half away from the ball-room! What will Lord Quinsy and the baron think? And I had engaged a dance each with them! They will never forgive me!”

“I am sorry to be the cause of your trouble,” begins the explorer, humbly.

“Please don't mention it! I wouldn't have missed this hour and what I have heard of brave Gordon for ten lords or fifty barons. It was only the governor I was thinking of. They must have asked for me, and the dear good man will be fairly wild looking for me.”

Mynheer Joe imagines an insignificant, bald-headed, good-natured, little man tearing around the hotel pleading with every one to help him find his daughter. If he comes across such an individual he will recognize him at once.

“You will excuse me, Mynheer,” she says, holding out her hand again—the hand upon which flash diamonds that, with those in her ears, at her throat and in her bonny brown hair, are surely worth a king's ransom.

He murmurs that he will be glad to meet her



again, perhaps in the morning, if circumstances are favorable, with a side-glance toward Mr. Grimes, that has no apparent meaning, and yet which causes a grim smile to appear upon the face of the silver king.

Then she glides from the *bijou* parlor. Sandy holding the *portière* aside, though he has to stand on his tiptoes in order to make it clear her head.

The three gentlemen are left alone. Sandy takes out a cigar and looks at the others. The mute invitation is immediately accepted, for a couple of hands are extended, and the weeds exchange owners.

“Let’s go outside. The house is no place for smoking, in my opinion,” remarks Joe.

So the trio adjourn to the piazza. More than one curious glance is cast toward them; for, in spite of the secrecy that has been exercised, rumors have gotten around concerning the truth. It is strange how these things leak out—a word is sometimes enough to start the ball rolling, and people, once interested, add a little here and a trifle there until a story has been manufactured out of whole cloth.

Hardly have they reached the piazza and Joe stops to light his weed, when a dapper little fellow, Sandy’s counterpart in nervous ways, steps up and taps him on the arm.

“Beg pardon—do I understand you have arrived from up the river, sir—from Khartoom?” asks this sprightly chap, apparently not noticing Sandy in the background.

Mynheer Joe puffs away, and between each puff he nods his head up and down in an affirmative way that sets the little man fairly wild with suspense.



He will speak soon—when he gets ready—but not until that time comes. It is plainly evident Mynheer Joe knows how to manage the creature known as a press agent.

Sandy is chuckling near by, dreadfully tickled at the thought of having for once obtained an advantage over his rival.

“You are quite right, sir. I have arrived this very night from Khartoom,” finally admits the object of all this attention, having reduced his weed to a point of subjection, where it would burn without much care.

Out come the pencil and note-book.

“Would you mind giving me a little information regarding the state of affairs at Khartoom when you left? I represent the New York *Herald*, the London *Times* and the Paris *Figaro*. I shall be pleased to take your views, sir, and give you every courtesy in my power,” rattles on the little correspondent; then catching sight of Sandy, his face blazes up, he waves his hand as though in warning, and cries:

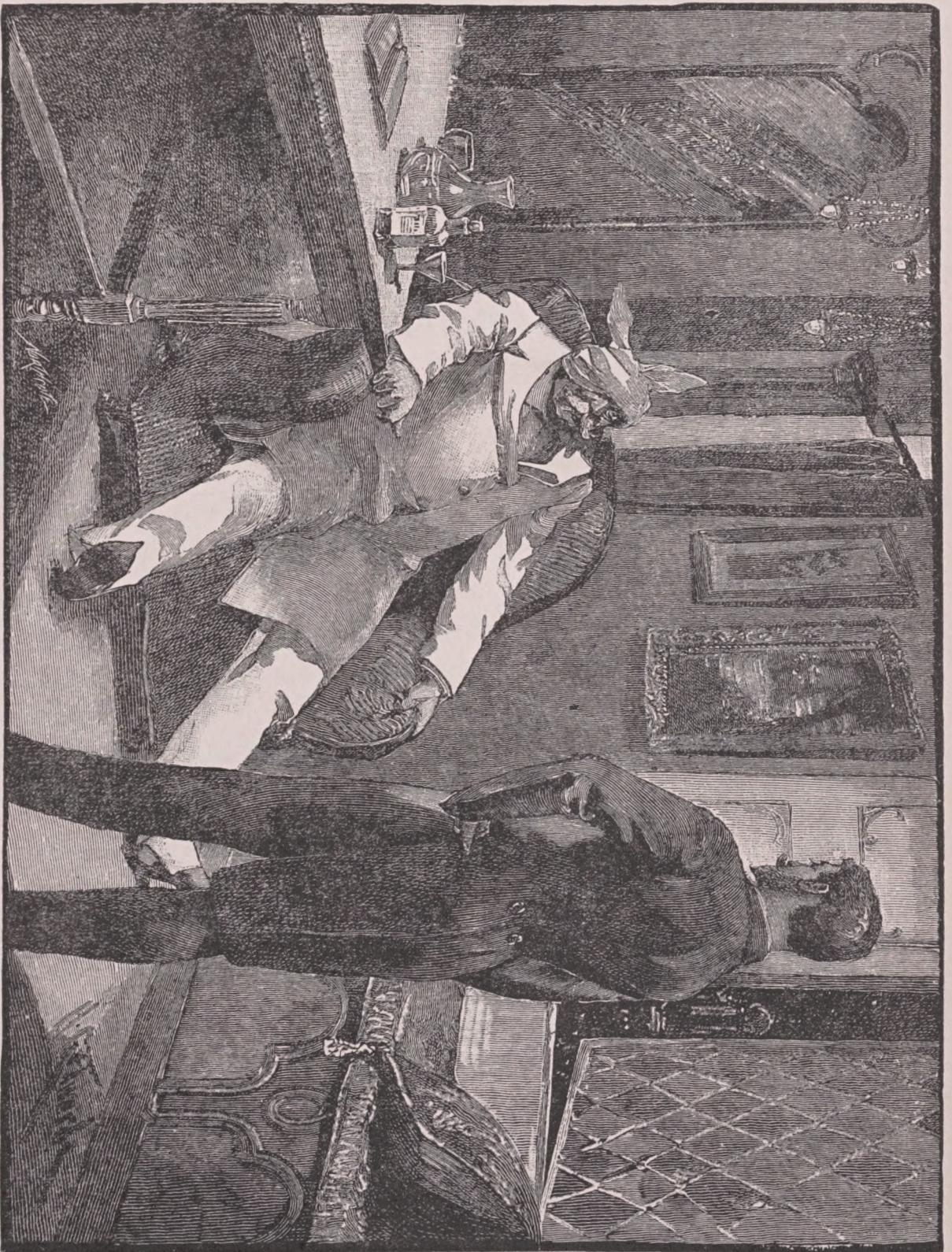
“Too late, Barlow—you’re left! Fall to the rear! I may let you pick up some crumbs presently, but don’t bother now. As you were saying, my dear sir, at the time you quitted Khartoom, matters were assuming a serious aspect?”

“Very,” replies Mynheer Joe, gravely.

“And Gordon—you left him well, hoping for the coming of the British line even now on its way there. His views and yours would be very acceptable reading for the world. A vast audience, indeed, sir. Would you kindly relate your story in



THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN MYNHEER JOE AND OLD TANNER.—See Chapter VIII.









detail, or at least that portion of it concerning Gordon?"

His manner is persuasive, his voice honeyed, and butter would fail to melt in his mouth. Unfortunately, he has laid hold of the wrong man. Mynheer Joe lays a hand on his shoulder and almost crushes him.

"For particulars, I must refer you to my press agent. Just now I am engaged. Your arm, Mr. Grimes, if you please."

"But where can I find him. I beg that you will inform me? This is a matter that concerns the whole civilized world. Think of it, sir! Tell me the name of this gentleman," and the excited correspondent even lays hold of the explorer's coat in his eagerness to gain his attention.

"You will find him yonder. Sandy, will you attend to this gentleman."

"Great Scott! Barlow knows all! I see it now! A grand conspiracy to beat me off! Well, I've picked up all the rumors, and I'll consolidate them into a sensation that will equal the truth. Catch a weasel asleep, eh?"

He is just about to rush off when Sandy laughs.

"Left again, old fel. The wires are entirely at my service from now until seven o'clock in the morning. You couldn't get a line out now on your individual responsibility if the khedive committed *hara-kiri*."

"Barlow, let me into it a little. I'll be entirely disgraced if I'm left entirely on this deal. Is Gordon dead?"

"Yes."



“ And Khartoom truly fallen ? ”

“ Without a doubt. ”

“ What will you take to let me send five lines merely announcing the fact ? ”

“ What will you give in promises for the future for a few crumbs, my boy ? ”

So the rival correspondents walk down the piazza haggling. Sandy has long waited for this hour ; his cup is full and running over, pressed down with good measure.

Meanwhile, the other couple move along the piazza in an opposite direction, enjoying the delicious atmosphere, their cigars and the bright scene.

By this time the great crowds have in a measure ceased to jostle elbows in the square called Esbehiyeh, for the hour grows late. Still there are enough present to keep up a lively appearance—to please the eye of the observer with the change of colors as they pass to and fro.

Something is on the mind of Mr. Grimes, but he perhaps thinks the present moment is hardly a propitious one in which to speak. Several times he opens his mouth, as though the spirit moves him, but on each occasion he shakes his head and remains silent.

As they cross the light thrown from the windows, more than one curious glance is cast upon them, for already has word been whispered around that Mynheer Joe has come from the scene of action, and there is an air of mystery thrown about him, which his personality increases rather than diminishes ; for, as has been said before, his face and



figure are such as would attract attention even on Pall Mall or the Champs-Elysees.

Looking into the dance-room, they see Molly Tanner gliding about in a dreamy waltz with a foreign-looking man wearing an immense mustache that curls up to his ears—no doubt the baron. She nods her head to them and smiles as she glances toward her partner in the dance; there is something so spicy and roguish about it that Mynheer Joe feels drawn toward the girl more than ever.

"She's a dandy," the effervescent correspondent had said to him, while on the way to the hotel, and the more he sees of her the better this peculiar comparison applies, though, upon trying to analyze it, he is bound to confess the meaning ambiguous and a trifle dim.

From the window they walk down to the end of the piazza. Here an acquaintance seizes hold of Mr. Grimes and begs a few minutes' private conversation with him, which, of course, he gives, asking Joe's pardon for leaving him.

The latter steps down to the square to walk a little upon the cool flags.

The events of the night have been more than singular, when his fortunes are concerned, and he has plenty to reflect upon as he strolls there in front of the hotel.

Around him are scenes also that must make some impression on his mind, although they are far from new to him.

While thus strolling aimlessly about, with the intention of killing a little time, so that he may rejoin Mr. Grimes when the latter is disengaged, Mynheer



Joe chances to pass that portion of the hotel known as the bar.

In common with all other hotels, Shepherd's has a retreat where the thirsty traveller can wash the dust out of his throat, and, judging from the manner in which it is being patronized on this night, the dust must be on the move in Egypt. A sand-storm could not cause the guests to call more frequently.

Mynheer Joe arrives upon the scene just in time to witness a rather comical spectacle. Of rows in the grand square there is always plenty, but as a general thing these are not among the guests of the hotel, but rather disputes between the travellers and their gaily-dressed dragomans or, as is more frequently the case, with these individuals and the owners of donkeys, while the donkey-drivers themselves are about as quarrelsome as our boys upon the canals.

Just now, however, Mynheer Joe is made the witness of a singular scene. Two foreigners are at it, hammer and tongs.

How it came about it would be impossible to state; each one believes the other guilty and that the apology ought to come from that side.

A comparison between the two causes the traveller to smile. In point of size they are surely antipodes, one so large and massive, the other diminutive.

The taller man has a voice like a tornado howling in the mountains, laying trees prostrate and swirling up the valleys. Now and then it is punctured with the sharp, file-rasping exclamations that burst from his antagonist, penetrating and shrill as the



highest notes of the violin. They growl and gabble together, each endeavoring to lay the blame of the collision upon the other. When two men possessed of fiery tempers get into a heated argument, the result is seldom in doubt.

Sooner or later they come to blows, and this period depends pretty much upon the state up to which their feelings have carried them.

This promises to be the case in the present instance. The little man is game despite the enormous difference in their size. He dances before his heavy antagonist, holding up his small fists in a way that proclaims him the possessor of some scientific knowledge in the line of self-defense. Should the giant, however, bring one of his sledge-hammer blows to bear upon him, these frail barriers must be brushed aside as though mere cobwebs.

Although the big man is angry, it can be seen that he is amused at the same time. Unless the fury of the other passes all bonds and he commits an assault, the tall man will hardly proceed to extreme measures. Just now he is endeavoring to alarm his antagonist by an exhibition of lung power—by bawling at him with all the tremendous force of a cattle drover on the war-path. His bull-like voice and the queer exclamations he uses would be extremely amusing to Mynheer Joe upon another occasion. Just now something of an important nature has come into his mind—something that causes him to take a new interest in this strange game that is being played before him.

This smaller man answers in all particulars the mental photograph he has drawn of Demosthenes



Tanner, the father of the fair Molly. He is small, slightly bald, nearly fifty, full of life and ginger, and ready to stand up for his dignity.

So Mynheer Joe decides on the spur of the moment that he has run across the man who has chartered the dahabeah *Alice*—he owes him a debt of gratitude on account of the rescue from the waters of the Nile—perhaps the time has come when he can repay that with interest.

Thus he finds more to engage his attention in the complication before him than others who have been gathered by the hot dispute.

In justice to Mynheer Joe, let it be said that his sense of fairness and the eternal fitness of things had much to do with his actions. He was never the man to sit calmly by and see a big dog set upon a small one. More than once in his past career he has been known to take the part of the weak and oppressed, even to his discomfort. There is some spirit left of the age of chivalry—it did not die out with the last of the helmeted, mail-clad knights.

Thus it will be seen that other motives influence Mynheer Joe besides the one important fact that this is, as he supposes, Molly's father who stands a fair show of being pulverized.

He means to take a hand in the game if it shows signs of reaching a point where blows must be exchanged. Gordon's messenger is full of fight—he always was; and the fact that this may be considered a street brawl does not once enter into his calculations.

It is the smaller man who rushes things and brings matters to a focus.



"You shall apologize or fight, sir! Do you think I am to be insulted with impunity? You are a big coward! I will show you how we do these things where I came from? Defend yourself!" he shrieks.

The big man is thus forced to an issue. He gives a roar as the other kicks at his shins, and looks as if about to hurl his *avouirdupois* upon his diminutive antagonist, when a hand clutches his shoulder, and Mynheer Joe steps between them, brushing back the little bantam cock and facing the Brahma.

"If you must fight, take a man of your size. Take me, for instance. Now come on," he says quietly.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FOOTBALL OF FORTUNE.

The man addressed is apparently taken by surprise. He no longer sees before him the diminutive form of the peppery little mosquito who has been barking his shins, but a man almost his equal in point of size—a man who holds his arms in a manner that suggests the practiced boxer.

There is no quarrel between these two, but the stranger has taken the place of the fellow who kicked the big man's shins, and must be held accountable for what has been done.

Whatever may be the shortcomings of the giant, he is certainly no coward. He has been loth to attack the little man, and would fain have held him out at arm's length as one might an ugly child; but here



is a foeman worthy of his steel. This is another case entirely.

His eyes flash and his whole face lights up with the fire of battle. Mynheer Joe discovers from his loud talk that he too is an American. He feels sorry to encounter a fellow-patriot under such peculiar circumstances, but it cannot be helped. Circumstances control these things more than any power on earth, and Mynheer Joe has made up his mind that he will not see Molly's father beaten if he can help it.

"I don't know you, man, but that makes little difference. I'm on to you. I'll mount you just like we mount a broncho out West. Offer yourself as a substitute for this little venomous spider, do you! Perhaps you belong to the same miserable breed. We whipped you twice, and, by hokey, we can do it again. I'm glad you come! Kinder hated to touch the little chap for fear I'd hurt him. I've seen his kind fall to pieces. But you're flesh and blood—you can take some punishment. I'm going to show the good people of Cairo how we do it out in Chicago. You just say your prayers, Mister Man."

All the while he thus explodes like the bursting of successive bombs, the big man is rolling up his coat sleeves. He is no fool, and his eye tells him that he has no child's play before him. The remarkably well-built form of Mynheer Joe betokens an athlete, and the quiet manner in which he awaits the attack is sufficient warning that he means to do his business.

As is natural, all this fuss and feathers has drawn



considerable attention, and quite a good sized ring is formed around the duelists. They find themselves surrounded by a mixed audience of Jew and Gentile, Moslem and pagan, black faces, brown faces and white.

The world is pretty much the same, take it as you will. When men come to blows there is no question about the audience if others are within reaching distance.

Even on the piazza a number of the guests belonging to the hotel can be seen, having been attracted by the rumpus. As Mynheer Joe notes this with a glance, somehow he finds himself wondering whether *she* is there, and if Molly will understand that he is in this street brawl simply as the defender of her *pater-familias*—the insignificant but belligerent little aggressor. He hopes she may learn the truth.

No time is given for reflection, since the other means business from the word go. Having prepared himself for the work in hand by rolling up his sleeves, the Western cyclone now comes at the explorer with great fury.

His force seems irresistible; so does that of the giant waves that come rolling in with tremendous energy; and yet the result is ever the same when they strike against the wall of rock that marks the shore. There is a concussion, a splendid picture; the rock is there just the same as before, but the wave has been beaten back, baffled, into the trough of the sea whence it sprang.

So in this case, Mynheer Joe represents the steadfast rock of Gibraltar. He meets the furious onset



of his powerful antagonist coolly, and for a brief period blows rain between.

Then the assailant backs out to get a new lease of breath. Astonishment is marked upon his face. He has believed himself an expert in the use of his fists, but in this quiet man he finds one who can give him points.

Although baffled in his first endeavor to down this champion of the little terrier that snapped at his heels, the other does not give up the fight yet. He is still in it, to the extent of his two hundred pounds' avoirdupois, and if he can only put one of his sledge-hammer blows just where it is wanted, he will ask for nothing better.

Already, though the affair has lasted only a minute or so, the sympathies of the crowd are plainly on Joe's side. His action in assuming the place of the small man has been seen; and, besides, his way of carrying himself wins the hearts of the onlookers, many of whom can appreciate the beauties of the manly art, even if unable to box scientifically themselves.

Thus, when the first round ends in the rough Western cyclone being hurled back, winded and baffled, if not badly used, a murmur of gratification arises from the crowd.

They have already sized the two duelists up, and although Mynheer Joe is not near so heavy as his antagonist, the victory is in his grasp, according to their way of thinking.

As for Joe himself, he means to injure the other just as little as possible. Circumstances and his love of fair play have thrown him into the arena,



and since he has taken a hand in the game, he must carry it out to the end.

This sort of business is not to his liking ; he has never posed as a gladiator or a prize-fighter before an audience, but he firmly believes he is doing his whole duty.

While he regains his breath and prepares for a second round, the Western tornado gives vent to his feeling in his explosive way :

"Ginger, I reckon I've bit off more 'n I can chaw this time. Looks like something of a trap hereabouts. But you 'll find me game to the backbone. I come of a game family, and we don't give up the ship. Rather like the cut of your jib, stranger, and your style in taking the part of that little bantam tells me you 're a Yankee, every inch of you. Sorry to spoil your looks, but you understand what you invited when you rip-sawed me."

"Come on ; I'm tired of this," is the only answer he can get from Joe.

It is a plain invitation, and the other accepts it in the spirit it is given. He again advances to the attack, his face showing a determination to end the battle then and there.

Once more the air seems to be full of flashing arms as the two engage in a hot series of blows and counters, side-shoots and parries. Neither appears to be getting the better of it, and yet one experienced in the craft of boxing can readily see a difference in their work. The assailant is putting in his best work, endeavoring to win ; while Mynheer Joe does not seem to be exerting himself to the utmost. When



the time comes for him to do so, something will give way in Denmark.

Joe is waiting for a chance. It is his desire to get in a knock-out blow. This, to be quite successful and end the affair, must be delivered in a certain quarter, and it is with this idea in view that he dallies.

Fiercer grow the efforts of the other to get in behind his guard. Those who look on see that the fighting is almost wholly done by one man, and if inexperienced, they believe he has the matter all in his own hands. They will learn something presently.

Watching the panting cyclone make a last desperate rush upon Joe, they see an arm suddenly shoot out straight from the shoulder, and hear a resounding whack as the knuckles come in contact with the other's head.

That ends it.

The blow has been adroitly given, and Joe stands there alone on the flags. His antagonist has reeled back into the arms of a friend. There is no more fight left in him ; that is positive.

Loud exclamations arise ; they mark the approbation of the audience. The affair has ended just as nearly every one has wished—if we except the defeated participant himself. Mynheer Joe has no desire to remain there the center of attraction. He is modest by nature and seeks no notoriety.

As he turns to move away, he feels his hand clasped and squeezed. Turning, he finds the little man whose champion he became. The weazened-up face of the bantam glows with pleasure.



"A thousand thanks, my good fellow! You gave him all he deserved—the beast! Just what I would have done for him, if you had let me get at him! Oh, you needn't smile; size doesn't cut a figure in it. All depends on scientific skill, sir—on skill!"

"No doubt. Glad to have done you a service. See you some time later," says Joe, conscious that the crowd is pressing around them again and feeling very unpleasant.

"But, my dear sir, you must allow me to publicly thank you for your services. Here is my card,"—Joe rams it in his pocket without even a glance at it—"and I beg that you will not be offended if I offer you this."

Before Mynheer Joe realizes what he is about, the other has filled his hand with gold pieces. So indignant is the explorer at the act that he does not even note the fact of their being English sovereigns, but, with an explosive ejaculation, hurls the precious metal out upon the square.

This causes a wild stampede of the crowd; excitement reigns supreme; donkey-drivers tussle with dragomans, fakirs roll over Arab sheiks—all filled with the mad greed of gold. Never before in the history of Cairo has the precious metal been sown broadcast like this.

The little man, whose idea seems to be that money can pay for any service, looks surprised at first, but shows no signs of anger. He is something of a philosopher on a small scale and accustomed to meeting strange people.

"Very well," he chatters, with a wave of the



arm; "we will consider the obligation settled by my thanks, then. If I can do you a favor at any time, call upon me, my good fellow."

With this, he marches off. His arrogance is really amusing. Mynheer Joe would be tempted to use the toe of his boot to accelerate the fellow's departure, only that he remembers one important factor—this little man is the "dear old governor" of the charming Molly, and any indignity offered to him will be sure to recoil on his own head. So he allows the dwarfed pugnacious specimen to depart in one direction, while he starts to leave the scene in another.

Neither of them gets five feet away ere some acquaintance brings them up. With Joe it is Mr. Grimes. The silver king has not known of the duel on the flagging until it is over. Then some one tells him that the gentleman who so lately accompanied him in his walk is engaged in a fight near by.

As he meets Joe face to face, his eye glances up and down the other's figure. There is not a sign of his having been in a fracas.

"All a mistake," he mutters aloud.

"What is?" asks Joe, smiling.

"They told me you were engaged in a street brawl. I came hurrying up, supposing you had been marked already by secret sympathizers of the False Prophet, known to be in Cairo, only to find that they have deceived me."

"Not at all, my dear fellow."

"Do you mean to say you have been in it?"

"I must plead guilty."

"They pitched on to you?"



"On the contrary, I think I did the aggressive. Never could see a big dog set on a small one."

"Oh, that's the way the game runs, is it? Well, did you chaw the big dog up?"

"I think I knocked him out. He's in that cluster over yonder. It's a lesson to him I hope, though I must admit the little chap was deuced saucy, and the other didn't give way until forced almost beyond human endurance."

"For my part, I'd have let 'em alone. Because a man is small, it's no reason he should impose on those who are larger. The chaps need a lesson to teach 'em something," says the silver king, with a shake of the head.

Mynheer Joe laughs softly.

"Let me complete my confession, my friend," he says, with charming frankness.

"Willingly."

"There was another reason why I threw myself into the breach and took up arms against the more powerful side."

Mr. Grimes elevates his eyebrows and looks at his companion in a peculiar way.

"Well?" he says.

"It was on account of beauty that I took part in this disgraceful affair."

"What! Was the old villain beating his wife?"

"Nonsense! The thought of Molly Tanner spurred me on to interfere."

"Come, no joking! What has she to do with the quarrels of street brawlers?"

"You are very obtuse, Mr. Grimes. It was her father who was in the affair."



"Oh, a light breaks upon me."

"Glad of it, sir. You see, I couldn't stand by and see a little man like Demosthenes Tanner being imposed upon. I brushed him aside and told his adversary to fight some one nearer his size. He did so, and—well, the result is yonder."

"A little man, eh?"

"Well, he's small when compared with—say you or myself, for instance."

"Tanner—oh, yes, of course," with a grin.

"And, really, the other chap towered above him like a giant. I never felt better than when I faced him and gave him his quietus."

"Is he down there yet?"

"I think he's getting over it now. See, the crowd parts. That's he sitting there, with his hand up to his head. I reckon he's dazed."

Mr. Grimes looks.

Then he utters a low whistle.

"You've done it, my dear fellow!" he says, aghast.

"Oh, he'll be over it presently; may have a headache to-morrow. But these knock-out blows, if properly given, don't kill," says Joe, coolly.

"It ain't that," continues Mr. Grimes.

"What, then?"

"Well, you see—Deuce take it! Here *she* comes! Now there will be the mischief to pay!"

Mynheer Joe hears his words, and, turning his head, glances around. There is no difficulty in discovering just what is meant. From the direction of the piazza a figure in white advances hastily. The



lights of the plaza flash from the diamonds in her ears and at her neck.

It is Molly !

Straight she comes to where they are standing, as if in that motley crowd her eyes have fallen upon these two figures first of all, and in them she recognizes friends.

Mynheer Joe feels a thrill of honest pride as it flashes upon him that this beauty will soon be thanking him from her heart for standing up in her dear old governor's place and meeting the attack of an enraged giant.

It is a pleasant sensation that creeps about his heart, for he feels that he has done a good action. In these days when a man dashes into a burning house and saves a child at the risk of his own life, he knows he has done a heroic act, though his modesty may prevent him from boasting about it.

Molly Tanner reaches them. It is Mynheer Joe she sees, and to him appeals. Her looks are startled. He will never forget how lovely she appears when she clasps his arm and, in a breathless manner, gasps ;

" Oh, Mynheer Joe, is it true? Has my dear old governor been hurt? He is always so impetuous—so ready to take offense. Tell me the truth. I can stand the worst. Indeed, I can !"

Her voice is pleading. One would imagine that he is endeavoring to hold back something from her that she should know.

" Miss Tanner, calm yourself, I beg," he says, wondering how he can explain matters without bringing his own share of it into notice.



"I am calm. Now tell me *all*," she replies, assuming, with an effort, a repose she is certainly far from feeling.

"There has been a little affair here over a dispute. I believe your father was engaged in it. Blows were exchanged—"

"And my dear old governor—" she cries, tightening her clasp upon his arm.

"Was uninjured. See, there he is yonder at this very moment," says the delighted Joe, pleased because she does not look upon little Demosthenes Tanner, pounded and bleeding.

He catches a cry close to his ears. Molly is no longer standing there. Quick as a flash of light, she flits across the open space. Mynheer Joe hears a hoarse chuckle beside him, and knows it proceeds from Mr. Grimes. His eyes follow the figure of the belle of Cairo. To his amazement, she passes the pugnacious little bantam without a look. What does this mean? She is on her knees beside the recovering Western cyclone! Mynheer Joe groans. He calls himself a fool, a dolt, as the truth flashes upon him and he realizes that it is Molly Tanner's dear old governor whom he has so scientifically knocked out!





## CHAPTER VII.

### NEWS FROM OVER THE OCEAN.

Mynheer Joe, for once in his life, feels a cold perspiration come out upon his forehead, which he nervously wipes away. He wonders is this *fear*. The man who has braved all manner of dangers in the past, faced death in its most horrible forms, in the poisonous swamps of interior Africa, through the jungles of India, where cobras, tigers and vengeful natives lie in wait; meeting the crazed Mohammedan dervishes of the False Prophet face to face in many an assault at Khartoom—this man actually trembling with fear because he dreads the scorn of a woman!

He laughs at himself for the fancy, but it is a nervous laugh, not at all natural; and, turning, finds Mr. Grimes surveying him in a comical sort of way.

“Tell me, did you really think that little nincompoop was Demosthenes Tanner?” asks the silver king, in a half-choked voice, for to him the whole situation is inexpressibly funny.



"I certainly did," answers Joe, wondering if it will remedy matters any if he should pass over and shake the little terrier until his teeth rattle in his head; he has conceived a sudden hatred for him.

"A terrible mistake, my dear fellow," grins the other, nodding his head seriously.

"Well, rather, under the circumstances. Tell me who that man is?"

Not that he is particularly anxious to know, but the question is a natural one and will help to carry him out of a predicament.

"The little man? That's the baron, one of Miss Molly's most devoted admirers."

"Confusion! How came it that he quarreled with her father, then?"

"I don't know. He must have met Tanner before, but it may not have entered his head that he is her father. Anyhow, the baron is used to serfs, and imagines he can run things with a high hand wherever he goes."

"A Russian?"

"Heaven knows what he isn't—Russian, German and Austrian—he has served under all their flags. At present, I have learned, he is under Alexander, and bound for India by stages. Russia has dark designs on the rich possessions of England on the Indian Ocean, and some day the hosts of the White Czar hope to rush over the mountains and overrun the whole of the empire along the Ganges. We may not live to see it, but it will come, as sure as the world moves."

Mr. Grimes talks in this way with an object in view—he is interested in the subject, and at the



same time hopes to divert the mind of his friend from the awful *contretemps* into which he has stumbled.

In this latter, he meets with a fair measure of success. As a traveller and explorer, Joe Miner is interested in the movements of armies on the chess-board of Europe, though his knowledge of diplomatic entanglements is very small compared with that of the war correspondent.

By this time Tanner is on his feet. His late antagonist feels as though he would like to slink out of sight, not that he is in the least ashamed of the part he took in the recent engagement, but because he dreads the moment when Molly's eyes must fall upon him after her father has pointed out the man to whom he owes his downfall.

He does nothing of the sort, however, but manfully holds his own. They pass on to the hotel without noticing him, whereupon Joe heaves a sigh of relief.

Then he takes himself mentally to task. Why should he care whether this young girl detests him or not? She is nothing to him—can be nothing to him. Her coming across his path has been a mere accident—a gentle ripple on the broad sea of his plans and existence. Then his mind goes back—he sees himself struggling in the waters of the blue Mediterranean, while the boat beats back to his aid—his arms clasping the fair young girl who clings to him so confidently. How often has this picture presented itself before his mind during days and nights of peril, when death howled at the walls of



devoted Khartoom, and brave Gordon fought back the hordes of dervishes again and again.

It is useless for Mynheer Joe to declare that this young girl has no influence upon his life. He knows even while thus endeavoring to deceive himself that there is something back of it all—a hidden power that manipulates the wires—a fate that controls their destinies.

Accompanied by Mr. Grimes, he again reaches the piazza, and seeking a quiet, retired nook, they start in to enjoy their cigars. Mynheer Joe seeks to throw this last disturbing element to one side, and being possessed of remarkable will power, he manages to do so, concentrating his mind upon other matters.

They chat about several things in general, and seem to be very comfortable. The explorer, when his cigar is half smoked, takes a glance around, and notes that they are quite alone, for the piazza at this point is deserted, the guests having wandered in the direction of the supper-room, for the hotel does nothing by halves.

It is no longer utterly dark. The remnant of a February moon has crept up over the horizon, and lends a penciling of silver to the Egyptian landscape. It is very romantic, for the moonlight gleams from many a dome-like mosque and towering minaret.

Mynheer Joe, after noting the fact that they are quite alone, turns to his companion and makes a remark that has a peculiar ring :

“ This is as good a time and place for explanations, Mr. Grimes, as we can find.”



The silver king looks at his companion and breathes out rings of smoke.

“‘Explanations?’ My dear fellow, to what do you refer?” he asks; but the expression on his face proclaims that he, at least, suspects.

“There is no need of concealment between us, Mr. Grimes. You may deceive these good people at the hotel, but I have heard of you, sir.”

“Oh!” mutters the individual addressed.

“Yes,” Mynheer Joe goes on, quickly, as though his mind is made up; “you pass as a silver king at Cairo. Across the water, Mr. Grimes, you are known as one of the shrewdest detectives in the country.”

He pauses again as if to let this shot go home. Both puff away at their cigars, as though the action may clear their brains. It is the explorer who breaks the silence.

“You don’t deny the soft impeachment, Mr. Grimes?” he says, with a query in his voice.

“I have no reason to, with you, sir, although I should not like this subject to become common property,” replies the stout man, in a singularly cool tone.

“Perhaps I can even guess the object of your visit to Egypt in this year of eighty-five.”

“Make a try at it now.”

“You are searching for a certain individual, by name Joseph Miner.”

“Bull’s eye, first shot,” laughs Grimes. “Come, now, how in the deuce did you know all this?”

“I have been looking for a visitor from across the water. Something told me I should find him in



Cairo. Your especial interest in me caused me to be doubly watchful. I remember your name through some peculiar incident that happened when last I saw New York, and as a result I unmasked the silver king."

While he thus speaks, Mynheer Joe shows no signs of uneasiness. He has not the manner of a man who has anything to fear when he finds an officer of the law following him. One who has embezzled a great sum of money might show signs of alarm, but this man evidently has no such burden upon his mind. It is with a far different object in view Mr. Grimes has sought him; that is evident. The *pseudo* silver king watches him from the corners of his eyes. Now that his journey to the burning land of Egypt has reached its fruition, he begins to entertain doubts as to its ultimate success. Mynheer Joe is undoubtedly a man with a determined character, not easily influenced. Can he offer any inducements whereby the traveller may change his plans and revoke a vow made in the past? Whatever secret he carries with him, Mr. Grimes hopes it may prove effective.

"There is little use, then, in my explaining why I am over here," he says, laconically.

"The same old story—to patch up a peace between Colonel Carringford, my uncle, and myself. I understand. It means much to him that this thing is done; but, although I trust I don't harbor malice, I never want to see his face again."

"Nor will you, sir," says the other, quietly.

"Ah! Then the colonel is dead?"



"Just so. He succumbed to his enemy at last."

"Peace be to his ashes! I've no doubt he kept his word and disinherited me?" with a peculiar inflection of the voice, as though the subject naturally has some interest for him

"No—and yes!"

"Come, that's a singular answer, Mr. Grimes."

"It is on that account I am over here. Perhaps you remember Jack Austin?"

"One of my best friends in the Quaker City."

"It was he who sent me. I have exhausted nearly four months in all. There remain eight more for you to show up in Philadelphia and prove your identity. That done within a year from the date of the old man's death, and you fall heir to his vast estates."

"Well," with a steady "puff-puff," "suppose I fail to show up—what then?"

"Why, man, there's a cool million at stake in this matter—think of it, enough to fit out expeditions to the North Pole—to the centre of the earth—money to squander in the most elaborate efforts to discover what even a Livingstone or a Doctor Kane has failed in."

How artfully Mr. Grimes puts this, appealing to what he knows is the weak spot in the make-up of his strange companion. Was ever such a scene as this known before, when a man pleads with a fellow human to appear and claim a fortune that awaits his coming?

Mynheer Joe seems to be weighing the whole affair in the invisible scales of his mind. When he speaks again it is reflectively.



“Eight months, you say. When did he die?”

“On the 10th of October last.”

“Eight months—let me see—from Cairo I go direct to India—it is impossible to give that journey up, for even now I may be too late to accomplish what I seek to do. Then, if all goes well there, I have made up my mind to see something of China in a region foreigners have never yet been able to penetrate, making my way through to Persia and the Mediterranean. Eight months are a short time, but then if everything goes well there is a chance that I may turn up in Philadelphia before or on next October 10th. It all depends on how fortune handles me, you know.”

It would be impossible to portray the feelings that possess Mr. Grimes while he listens to these remarkable words. He has seen many types of men in his life, and looks upon the whole human race as gold-worshipers, yet here is a man who seems to have an honest scorn for the dross. It is the most astonishing event Mr. Grimes has ever come across in all his life. He holds his cigar between finger and thumb and surveys Mynheer Joe with amazement.

“You are the first man I ever met in my range, sir, who would snap his fingers at a fortune which he could have by putting out his hand and grasping it,” he mutters.

“Perhaps so, Mr. Grimes. I know my own mind best, and as you perhaps are aware, possess enough means for all the purposes of my business. A little money goes a long way when in the bush, and I don’t travel like Stanley with from one to five hun-



dred porters and fighting men. By the way, supposing I fail to turn up by the time specified, does the property go to charity?"

Mr. Grimes has been expecting this, and yet he twists uneasily in his chair, as though hardly willing to answer.

"No. It goes to the other side of the house."

"Ah! The Bunnors?"

"A descendant of theirs, daughter of the last Miss Bunner. She married and was lost sight of for a long time, but her family turned up out West somewhere."

"Do you know the name of this heiress, Mr. Grimes?"

"Well, yes, sir, I have heard it," he replies.

"Let me have it, please," remarks Mynheer Joe, taking out his note-book. "A man is bound to feel some interest in the party who will come into a million or not, according to his whim. If you have seen this party— By the way, is she a spinster or married woman?"

"The former, by all means," with a grin that Mynheer Joe takes note of and presumes is caused by the fact that the party referred to is an antiquated old maid, with queer little curls, blue glasses and a pet cat—oh, he can see her in imagination, just as he pictured the Hon. Demosthenes Tanner—and as truly.

"I trust she'll make good use of the money if through my failure to appear it falls to her," pursues Joe, thoughtfully.

"No doubt of that, sir, no doubt of that," says the other, with something of a chuckle. "According



to my idea of thinking that money is bound to go the same way whether you get it or the other."

"That 's an enigma. Mr. Grimes, explain."

"Well, you see, she 's uncommonly fond of travel—has been up Mount Blanc, partly scaled the Matterhorn, cruised along the whole coast of Algiers, and has any number of trips in contemplation which will consume money and add to the knowledge of geographers. Bless you, sir, she 's got a medal already from the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britian in connection with certain features concerning some daring work she did in the Alps."

"Phew! A regular female discoverer! An adventurer in petticoats. I 've met a number of such. They 're all alike. And while admiring their grit in daring perils in unknown lands, I am free to confess, Mr. Grimes, that I was never struck with their personal charms. It is a business that only the most determined characters take to—women who partake more of the man in their nature. You 've seen 'em often."

Mr. Grimes is shaking all over with some emotion. He coughs, as though it is a little tobacco smoke that has gotten into his windpipe and choked him.

"Of course, my dear fellow. But you do wrong to condemn the whole class. I've always found there were exceptions to every rule."

"Come, don't think I'm throwing out innuendoes against female travellers. I've met several wonderful women who accompanied their husbands into danger and threatening death. I'm only stating as a fact that all with whom I am acquainted are strong



characters, with plain, resolute features. I presume the life they lead makes them look so mannish."

"Yet, they, too, may have been lovely once," murmurs the *pseudo* silver king.

"The name, Mr. Grimes—the name? Perhaps I may have met the lady somewhere."

"And I am sure of it. It is now less than half an hour since you knocked her dear old governor out in one round."

Mynheer Joe drops book and pencil and springs to his feet as if made the recipient of a galvanic shock from one of the electric eels he is so fond of telling about.

"Why, man, you don't mean to tell me that it is Molly Tanner?" he bursts out with, whereupon his companion begs him to remember that others are not far away, and one scene of an evening is quite enough.

By this time Mynheer Joe, the erstwhile cool messenger from Khartoom, has picked up his book and seats himself close beside Mr. Grimes, upon whose arm he fastens a clutch, while with a voice full of eagerness he asks:

"Tell me the exact truth, my friend. There is no reason for concealment between us. You say Molly Tanner will come in for that million if I fail to turn up?"

"That is the whole of it, my dear Joe."

"Of course she knows the nature of the will?"

"Word for word."

"I am puzzled."

"How so?"

"She met me, heard my name, and yet did not



recognize me as the party who could step between her and this fortune."

"Bah! You forget something. You assumed your uncle's name, which, it seems, for reasons best known to yourself, you have thrown off again."

"True, sir."

"The document speaks of Joseph M. Carrington as the coming man. How was she to know Mynheer Joe as that party?"

"Ah! You are right, Mr. Grimes, you are right!"

"This young woman, as I told you, is an enthusiast in the work of seeing unknown countries, climbing mountains that have never yet been scaled, and, in fact, accomplishing deeds that you men love so dearly."

"I remember she spoke of being fond of travel," he mutters, thoughtfully. This surprise has taken his breath away, and for the time being Mynheer Joe is not himself.

"Just at present she has an object in her travel beyond mere adventure or sight-seeing. She is searching for *a man*."

"Ah!"

"By name, Joseph M. Carrington."

"On deck. What will she do when she finds this same personage?"

"Endeavor to send him home to Philadelphia in time to secure his inheritance. She believes the old man's will is unjust, and desires to set matters right. No one looks for the missing Carrington more earnestly than this girl who would most profit by his absence."



"Then Molly Tanner is one in a thousand. I knew I could not be mistaken in her face. Here is another peculiar tie that draws us together. Make up your mind, Mr. Grimes," as he tosses his cigar away and jumps to his feet, "I go to India from here, and the chance is now one in a thousand that I turn up in Quakerdom in time to secure the conditions of the will."

Mr. Grimes does not rise, but puffs away at his Havana, brought across the water, while he looks after Mynheer Joe's retreating form.

"Well," he says with a chuckle, "two and two make four. The magnet draws—he goes to meet her. I may be beaten in one sense, but there are more ways of accomplishing a thing than enter into your philosophy, Horatio. Kismet! It is indeed fate!"







## CHAPTER VIII.

### SANDY.

Mynheer Joe enters the nearest room and finds a few of the guests scattered about. His eye seeks one form alone—and finds it not. It is uncertain how Molly will receive him, as he cannot tell whether her father will relate the circumstances of the affair to her or not.

Conscious that a pair of eyes have fastened upon him, he looks across the room to see the small man whom Grimes designated as the wily baron, the secret emissary of the Russian government, smiling and nodding in a condescending way that is irritating, to say the least.

Just then Mynheer Joe has a peculiar sensation sweep over him; he is conscious of a deep dislike toward this man. He does not attempt to explain the feeling. Perhaps it is rivalry that brings these two together—a striving after the smiles of a beautiful girl.



Molly Tanner brushes past the baron at this moment, having been able to leave her parent, who is not badly injured in any way. The Russian puts out a hand to stay her passage, but she heeds him not, advancing straight as the home flight of a bee for the spot where the explorer stands. In another moment she is at his side.

"How is your father?" he manages to ask, feeling like a hypocrite; and, but for the fact of his face being already tanned, the blood mounting upward would betray him.

"He feels no effect from his fall, but is full of deep anger," Molly replies.

"Against—the man who struck him?"

"No, singularly enough he doesn't seem to feel that way toward the wretch. His anger is wholly directed against the man who threw the banana-skin upon the flags on which he slipped at the time he was struck."

"Oh!" says Joe, with a gurgling smile, as he grasps the defeated gladiator's ruse to excuse his downfall. "Singular how accidents will happen. I've had as strange things occur to me at times. But, Miss Molly, how is it with you? If your father does not bear malice toward the unlucky offender who was so rash as to measure strength with him, do you also forgive him?"

"Not I—the *wretch*. It was my dear old governor he struck. If I had been present I'm afraid I might have done something desperate."

And her flashing eyes give Joe an idea that this is no mere idle threat on her part.

He shrugs his shoulders and continues:



"I believe it was a fair, stand-up business. But we will not discuss it further, Miss Molly."

"Pardon me, but—" she stammers.

"What can I do for you?" seeing she is about to ask some favor at which she hesitates.

"I don't know why I speak to you in this way, since I have known you for so short a time. I have numerous friends here—acquaintances, I should call them—but *you* saved my life, and, somehow I feel that I can say to you what I should hesitate to speak to others."

"Yes," he utters encouragingly, feeling deeply flattered by her words, and yet conscious of an uneasy sensation, for the baron is glaring at him from across the room, and there is something baleful in that diplomat's frown.

"Will you help me?" she asks bluntly.

"I promise you, to the best of my ability," he replies without a second thought.

"A thousand thanks. I knew I could depend upon you," she murmurs.

Mynheer Joe does not dream the nature of the request she is about to make.

"What can I do for you," he finally asks. "Do not hesitate. Speak out."

"You may think me vindictive, perhaps."

"Never!"

"But when I think of the dear old governor being so badly used, my blood fairly boils."

"Ah!"

"Do you think you could find the wretch who beat my governor, Mynheer Joe?"

"I am sure of it," stoutly.



"Will you do this—for me?"

"Assuredly."

"And bring him before me?"

"I will drag him there by the neck and the heels, though he has the strength of a Samson."

This wonderful speech receives its reward, of course, in the shape of a sweet smile; but it is still too early to tell what the designs of the explorer may be.

"You are very kind, Mynheer Joe. When this fellow is before me, I am in doubt what to do—whether to give him a piece of my mind or use a whip on him, as I have read before of energetic women doing. In some way I must show him that he cannot beat my dear governor with impunity."

Joe almost smiles as he thinks of the ferocious and warlike Tanner having need of such a defender as this. But the situation is so extremely delicate and desperate that he has no heart to be amused at its ridiculous side.

"Will you leave the decision with me?" he asks, having a bold idea.

"With pleasure," she replies.

"And abide by the result?"

"Yes, indeed. It will take a load off my mind to have you decide my course."

"Then, if I were you, I would not think of doing anything with a whip. In the first place, it will get your name in the papers—news-gatherers are so ready to seize upon a sensation and make the most of it. Thus you would find people turning to look at you in the street, not because you had done any-



thing noble, but because you had horse-whipped a man who for some reason was powerless to resist."

"Say no more; I really did not dream of it."

"Besides," he goes on, quietly, "I have an idea the poor devil will suffer worse at words of reproach from your lips than he would under the tortures of El Mahdi."

"It shall be as you say, Mynheer Joe, *only* I must give him to understand that the next similar offense—"

"Yes—the next similar offense—"

"Will not only be followed by displeasure but something more lasting."

"You need never fear that this unlucky wretch will ever offend again in the same way. I can guarantee that, Miss Molly. It was all a mistake, anyhow, which I can explain. You see, he had a positive idea—"

Unfortunately for his peace of mind, Mynheer Joe gets no further than this. They are interrupted. The baron and a companion come up and introduce some subject that all Cairo is talking about.

Molly looks annoyed, while Mynheer Joe is secretly fuming. He silently nurses his wrath, hoping that some time the chance may come when he can take it out upon the baron. Depend upon it, he will no longer stand between the other and any vengeance he may invite; indeed, it would do him good to watch a man of about Tanner's build use the baron neatly up. His ideas have changed, you see.

Then Sandy makes his appearance, and Joe presently finds himself *tête-à-tête* with his voluble newspaper friend.



There are times when one desires a confidant; even a man likes to pour his woes into a sympathetic ear. Mynheer Joe's life has been such that, as a general thing, he has been deprived of this privilege; but he has the feeling deep down in his heart all the same.

In Sandy he sees the friend who may help him out of the hole. A suggestion will do it, for his brain, usually so clear, seems strangely muddled just at present.

Besides, the war correspondent knows Molly and her father very well, having met them in various places. Perhaps he can discover a loophole of escape, whereby Joe may crawl out of his awkward scrape with honor.

Having made up his mind to trust Sandy, he first of all draws a pledge from him that he will not reveal a word of the story or hint at it in any of his correspondence; all of which Sandy, duly impressed with the gravity of the situation, solemnly promises.

Then Joe relates the difficulty into which his impetuosity and love of fair play have led him, nor does he forget to lay due emphasis on the fact that when taking the little man's part he fancied and truly believed he was defending the dear old governor himself.

Sandy holds in as long as he can, and at last, doubling up, shakes all over with laughter. It is silent, too, all but the gurgling sounds as of water bubbling down a rocky ravine.

Mynheer Joe appreciates the situation, knows he has made a consummate donkey of himself, and although naturally tempted to make use of his



boot, firmly refrains. Two mistakes do not make a right. Sandy has reason to be merry. And, besides, Joe realizes that he has need of advice from this sagacious writer—this little man who has, figuratively, waded knee-deep in gore at battles, searching for news.

The great obligation under which he has, this night, placed Sandy, by giving him the story of Khartoom's downfall and Gordon's death, must serve as a lever to lift him from the slough of despond. Back of it, of course, is Sandy's personal regard for his fellow-citizen. That goes a great way. He patiently waits till the other has had his laugh out.

"I must beg your pardon, Joe. Awful trick, that of yours. Too impulsive by half, my dear boy. If you had known the baron as I do—"

"I would have danced to see him knocked out!" cries Mynheer Joe, vindictively.

"Ho! You've come to it already, eh? Thought it would be that way. Expect pistols for two between you and the baron yet. Sly fellow, that man. They do say he's downed half a dozen men in affairs of honor, with sword or pistol."

Mynheer Joe snaps his fingers.

"To the deuce with the baron! If he ever comes in my way, I'll ring his beastly neck as I would that of a chicken!" he mutters.

"Good! Glad to hear you say so! Despise the fellow myself. And yet, Joe, he's a power in the land, protected by a hired gang that is paid by Russian gold. When the time comes, if it ever does, for you to lay that plotter out, remember that



the moment your hand touches him it will be a signal for several desperadoes to leap into the game, armed, and ready to take life, if necessary, in order to save the emissary who is worth so much to Russia."

Mynheer Joe gives a low whistle.

"The deuce! Do you happen to know these men, Sandy?" he asks in a low tone.

"Two of them I am sure of. There is another who baffles me. Without any apparent motive, cast your eyes across the room. Do you see that tall, elegant-looking man in full evening-dress? He is known here as Colonel Taylor, an ex-Confederate officer. In reality, he is a Russian spy, and one of the things he is paid for is to be always at the elbow of the baron, so that a signal will fetch him up. I've seen the baron in many places since coming to Cairo, but never has Colonel Taylor been more than fifty feet away."

"And the other shadow?" pursues Joe, whose mind is working upon a subject.

"He is a dark-skinned fellow—a native of India, I believe. You know the baron leaves Cairo for Bombay or Calcutta soon, and this man will be of great use to him there."

"See here," says Joe, quietly, "I remember such a fellow. He caught my eye on the square at the time I noticed the disturbance. He made me think of my faithful Kasse, which fact causes me to remember him. At the time he was just back of Tanner; indeed, not five feet separated them."

"Just so," remarks Sandy, significantly.

"An idea strikes me."



"Well, let's hear it."

"It is possible that had Tanner been forced into conclusions with the baron, he would have been set upon by these Thugs."

"I am positive of it."

"Such a thing would explain the confident assurance of the baron."

"Yes."

"A brilliant thought comes to me, Sandy."

"I can guess it, old fellow."

"In knocking Demosthenes Tanner out, I was really doing him the greatest favor."

"No doubt of it."

"Saving his life."

"They would have nearly or quite finished him."

"If *she* could only be induced to see the thing in that light."

"Depend upon it, Joe, my dear fellow, she shall, I myself will undertake to open her eyes."

"God bless you, Sandy!"

"One good turn deserves another. You gave me a monopoly of your startling news, and that is something I can never repay. Rest assured that when Sandy Barlow has had his *tête-à-tête* with Miss Molly, she will believe you a god."

"Heavens, don't draw it too strong, my boy!"

"I shall deceive her only in one thing."

"What is that?"

"You knew or suspected the truth when you rushed into the breach."

"That will hardly do, for you remember I thought the small man was her father

"Bosh! Don't tell her that—she will feel insulted



—thinks the old governor is the handsomest man in the world. No, no, you must have suspected the truth beforehand—we'll give you the benefit of the doubt, anyway."

"Take a look across—as I live, that little fiend is himself telling Molly the truth. Notice the look upon her face—she can't wholly believe him. Confound the villain, he's got the start of me! Now, what am I to do, my good friend?"

Joe has been considerably shaken up by what he has just seen, and he turns to his companion for consolation.

Fortunately, Sandy is equal to the emergency, and quickly responds:

"Leave Miss Molly to me, Joe. I'll undo all that rascal has built up, and establish you in her heart more firmly than ever," he says, at which the traveler squeezes his hand in a way that marks his gratitude.

"Again I say, bless you, my boy. What a fix I would be in, only for your genius in arranging things."

"Don't mention it. Time may be near at hand when poor Sandy shall have need of your strong, right hand—who knows?"

"And willingly shall it be placed at his disposal. But, see here, I ought to have a hand in my own redemption—I don't like the idea of standing around doing nothing while you accomplish the work."

"That's just like a man of your size, Joe. Well, I see no reason why you shouldn't hold up your end of the log!"

"Good!"



"While I win over the daughter, you can be patching up the peace with the awful dad."

"Good heavens, face that tartar again! I'd sooner take a whipping!"

"Hush! He's her dear old governor—a savage I'll admit, someways, but the better you know him the more you'll find in Demos to admire. Diamond in the rough, you see."

"Exactly. Well, I do admit I could see something of a sterling character back of the exterior. Yes, I'd even grow to like the old bear, if need be."

"For Molly's sake!" says Sandy slyly.

"For Molly's sake," returns Joe, unabashed.

"See here, old chap, don't you think you're—well, rushing matters?"

"How so?"

"Just got in to-night from Khartoom—fought a duel on Esbehiyeh square and already arranging to make way with your rival for the hand of the belle of Cairo, whom you have met to-night—"

"Do you mean Molly?" interrupted Joe.

"Of course, man."

"You forget, Sandy, she has belonged to me for a whole year. I saved her from death in the Mediterranean at Malta, and ever since her fair face has haunted me, sleeping or waking. I felt that, if I lived, we would come together *somewhere*. You don't know what a solace it has been to me, in times of danger, to think that I had been able to do her a service and that this invisible bond united us, though we might be thousands of leagues apart."

"I see, you're a gone case, Joseph."



"Proud to admit it, Sandy. Think of the peculiar circumstances that unite us, outside of the fact that I saved her life and that both of us are crazy on the subject of travel."

Hereupon, in a sketchy way, he relates the story of the legacy in all its peculiar details.

Sandy's mouth opens as he hears. He utters exclamations repeatedly about it being the most remarkable thing he ever listened to and worthy of recording. When Mynheer Joe finally ceases, the little war correspondent finds it his turn to do the squeezing act, and lends all his power to the work of crushing the traveller's strong hand; but Joe minds it little more than he might the buzzing of a fly. Sandy evidently is not much of a success at such work.

"Most remarkable case. Never heard the equal of it, my boy. Oh, the baron little suspects what a miserable show he has! Not that she would probably look at him even if you were not here; but, then, there's no accounting for the taste of our American belles, I'm sorry to say," heaving a sigh as he catches a glimpse of his own diminutive person in a glass.

"Many a flower, you know, Sandy, is born to blush unseen," says Joe, consolingly, "and who knows but what some day you may jump in and save an heiress from a watery grave, to be rewarded with her hand."

"All very good," groans Sandy, with mock despair, "but I can't swim a stroke."

"Then I advise you to take lessons in the Nile at once. Every man should be prepared to accept his



fate as it comes, and be ready to rescue a drowning maiden."

"I'll do it!" said Sandy, impulsively.

"Oh, not just now, I hope?" as the other moves off.

"Hardly, my boy. I notice that the baron has left Miss Molly, she stands there looking disconsolate. I am off to cheer her up—to whisper words of consolation in her gentle ear that will warm her heart toward a certain person of my acquaintance."

"Thanks, my fine fellow, and don't forget to pray for me."

"Eh—what now, Joe?"

"Because, while you enjoy your *tête-à-tête* with an angel, I shall be engaged with—well, hardly the Old Nick, but at least, the governor. I go now to beard the lion in his den, and fate holds the scales in the balance."







## BOOK II.

### THE DUEL UNDER THE PALMS.

---

#### CHAPTER IX.

“MYNHEER JOE, AWAKE—DANGER!”

It is little trouble for Mynheer Joe to find out where Demosthenes Tanner is quartered. One of the English servants of Shepherd's gives him the information, and is tipped immediately in a way that warms his heart.

As Joe passes by a window, on his way to the quarters of the great American orator, he is given a last glimpse of the drawing-room or parlor of the hotel and avails himself of the opportunity to take a look in the direction where he saw Molly standing. She is still there, but seated upon a Turkish divan; and at her side is the little war-correspondent, talking earnestly. Joe's heart gives a bound of pure delight when he notes the look of pleased surprise spreading over her fair countenance as she



hears Sandy's marvelous tale ; for the latter is used to making the most of any news ; it is his daily business, and surely time has never given him a morsel he can enlarge upon with more pleasure than the valor of his dear friend Joe.

" God bless him—he's a comrade worth having. In battle brave as a lion despite his size ; in time of trouble a wise counselor. I hope the day will come when I can do as much for Sandy."

Thus muttering, Mynheer Joe moves along the corridor until he finally reaches the door to which he has been directed. He makes a survey and finds that the light flows from the windows, which is a pretty good indication that the inmate has not retired. Boldly he knocks—this thing has to be gone through with, and the sooner he starts at it the better. Besides, Joe has a pretty good idea that he holds the trumps and can best Demosthenes Tanner as readily at argument as he did in the duel.

" Come in !" roars a voice that would scare a crocodile half to death.

Mynheer Joe opens the door and pushes through into the room, surprising the giant in the act of saturating a handkerchief with the extract of hamma-melis, as Joe instantly recognizes the odor. His back is toward the door, and he does not even turn his head to see who it is.

" A beastly long time coming, Tom ! Told Molly to send you here half an hour back. Don't ask what's the matter now. Been in one of my usual rows, you see ; only the seventh since leaving Constantinople. This time met a Tartar. Infornal rascal



played with me. Just think of it—played with the only Tanner as a cat does a mouse, and then when he got tired, knocked me out. If I could only have him alone in this room five minutes, I'd let him know I ain't so green as I look, if I was caught napping once! Here, Tom, you old heathen, take hold and tie this handkerchief back of my head. Have a stiff neck for a bloody week most likely. Not so tight, you murdering Hoosier! D'ye want to kill me outright? There—that'll do. Now sit down and have a glass with me. Be social, if it is past midnight. That's the best part of the day in this abominable country. Why don't you say something, you miserable mute! What! You? Death 'and furies! Here's treachery!”

The roar he gives as his one uncovered eye falls upon the face and figure of Mynheer Joe is absolutely appalling. He starts back and attempts to throw himself into an attitude of defense, but striking an obstacle, he sits down in an easy-chair so forcibly, that the breath is driven from his huge body, and he can only sit there and gasp, blinking at Joe like a great owl.

The latter is strongly tempted to laugh. There is something so ridiculous in all this affair, but he realizes that such an act must forever ruin his chances of a reconciliation. He must control himself until a more favorable opportunity comes about.

Acting upon the impulse of the moment, he holds out his hand.

“Mr. Tanner, I have come here to beg your pardon for what has occurred. It was all a misunder-



standing on my part. I want you to shake hands with me and tell me you bear no malice," he says frankly.

Demosthenes Tanner grins a little, but as yet makes no move toward accepting the proffered hand. His neck twinges, and this sets him against his late antagonist.

"Fine words don't cure a stiff neck, sir. I confess I admire the way you took the part of a small man, and your style of using your dukes nearly won my heart; but I refrain from making a peace, for I live in hopes of having another set-to, when I may have my revenge," replies this singular specimen of Western chivalry.

"That will be impossible, sir. I will never strike a blow against you again since I have learned that you are Miss Molly's father."

"What the deuce has she to do with it? If you and I choose to engage in a little sport of our own, whose business is it?" growls Tanner, his hand now slowly advancing to meet that of the honorable antagonist, whom he respects as a foeman worthy of his steel.

"I repeat what I said, sir. I am sorry to have struck you. You must pardon my indiscretion—for Molly's sake."

"Now that's twice you've brought her name into the affair. What in the mischief has she to do with it? What is she to you? I don't ever remember seeing you before to-night. Molly has a regiment of admirers, but she introduces me to every one. Who are you, sir?"



"I am known as Mynheer Joe, sir, a corruption of my real name.

"Ah, the fellow they're all talking about! Been up with Gordon, eh? Great man, that Gordon—wonderful man! Tell me something about him. Since it was you who put me into this fix, it's only fair to insist on your amusing me."

"Presently, Mr. Tanner. First, are you going to shake hands with me?"

"By Jove, yes, sir! I like your looks. I like the way you swung that terrible right arm into my neck—I like *you*! There's my hand, and once Demosthenes Tanner gives it he never goes back on a friend."

Mynheer Joe has won, and as yet he has only made a beginning. Flushed with victory he squeezes the huge fist of the governor, who looks very amiable in his eyes now. Circumstances alter cases. The bull-like roar of the Western orator will never seem the same to him after this.

"Perhaps I have a claim on your friendship, Mr. Tanner," he says modestly.

"How's that. Unbosom yourself, my boy."

"It seems like egotism to speak of it, but your daughter will soon be telling you. I had the extreme pleasure of jumping overboard at Malta, a year back, and assisting Miss Molly when she was thrown into the water."

Tanner gives another roar. He actually throws his arms around Mynheer Joe and hugs him much after the bear style. The explorer's ribs threaten to give way under the pressure, and he is immeasurably relieved when Tanner has finished his demon-



stration, which is accompanied by a string of delighted expletives and a running fire of questions.

Mynheer Joe explains matters as best he can, telling why he hurried away without waiting to give even his name or meet the father of the young girl whose life he had saved. The orator has evidently fallen deeply in love with him; he keeps his eyes constantly on Joe's face and rubs his hands together in a delighted manner.

The victory is so complete that Joe cannot but feel proud. He only hopes Sandy may have as earnest a measure of success in the other direction. Knowing the capacity of his friend for accomplishing what he sets out to perform, he does not much doubt the ultimate result of the other's quiet interview with Molly.

There is something more to tell, and he believes the opportunity is ripe for it. This is the line of thought advanced between Sandy and himself, and which concerns the probable outcome of the difficulty between Tanner and the baron, had it been allowed to go on.

Tanner listens with wondering eyes and nodding head. It is all news to him, and yet he can easily believe it. Certain circumstances combine to force him to this conclusion.

"So," he bursts out with, at the conclusion of the recital, "I was near being the victim of a conspiracy, eh? Perhaps the rascal had an idea he could run off with my girl, once the old man was out of the way. And you really saved my life by stepping in? Mynheer Joe, I am your debtor forever? Show me a way by means of which I can repay you.



The baron is a Russian secret agent on his way to Indian, eh? Perhaps we'll see more of him. I'm something of a diplomat myself, once I put my mind on it. Now, do you know what Demosthenes Tanner has a good notion to do? Set up in opposition to this rascally baron—play him for a sucker and land him in the arms of the British in Bombay. Why not—I come of old English stock, and my sympathies are against the movement of the bear in the direction of Fair India. Now don't think me a fool—I reckon I can meet him even, brain for brain, and give him points. As for his dogs of war, I match 'em here,” and the orator, with an astonishingly rapid movement, such as these Western men alone can show, produces a weapon from some secret pocket—a revolver that looks ferocious in the lamp-light.

Mynheer Joe's opinion of Molly's father takes an upward bound. He realizes that the giant is no simpleton, and has met too many strange people in his past to give up easily when brought in contact with a man of the baron's caliber.

The two gentlemen smoke a cigar in company, and then Joe takes his leave, promising to see the other on the morrow, and relate much of what occurred at Khartoom. He hopes Molly may be present, for her company will inspire him to do his best.

“I trust your inconvenience may be slight, and that you will harbor no ill-feeling toward me as the cause of your discomfort,” the explorer says, when taking his leave.

“Nonsense! A mere love-tap! Don't bother



yourself about it, my boy. I'm used to worse things than that, I can tell you," replies the orator, shaking hands warmly.

Thus Mynheer Joe leaves him, and feels that his work has been a grand success. Light-hearted, he quits the apartments of Tanner, and once more seeks the realm where music and gayety abound, for the guests are having a last dance ere the enjoyable affair breaks up.

He looks for Sandy, but that worthy seems to have vanished. It may be he has found something new to attract his notice, and is busily engaged getting it down in black and white.

Joe only has a glimpse of Molly, and she does not see him as she passes through the rooms, bidding several lady friends good-night. Undoubtedly she is about to retire.

This makes him think it might be as well for him to do the same, although he does not feel sleepy, after having wooed the gentle goddess for twenty-four hours.

Presently he runs across Mr. Grimes, and that worthy, being interested in all that pertains to his fortunes, at once asks numerous questions, receiving in reply a variety of information that he can sort over at leisure.

He takes Joe to the office of the hotel in order to book him. Fortunately, some one has just departed, and there is a vacant room, to which he is assigned. Another chance places it next that of Mr. Grimes.

By this time the strains of the music have ceased, most of the people retired and many of the lights are



being put out, so that Shepherd's, after the hop, resumes its natural appearance.

Out on the square of Esbehiyeh the utmost solitude reigns, broken only by the snarling of wandering dogs, which abound in the Cairo of to-day. The fakirs and mountebanks, snake-charmers and peddlers, curious idlers and beggars have all cleared out as the lights drop in the hotel.

Cairo sleeps.

Mynheer Joe finds himself alone in his room. His eyes are not a bit heavy, and he wonders what he will do with himself to pass the time away until morning.

Joe's one great vice lies in the fact that he is an inveterate smoker. Deprived of a cigar for six months, the weed seems doubly sweet to him just now, and he made sure to lay in a supply before leaving the office.

His first act, therefore, upon finding himself alone in his room, is to draw a chair near the window, throw himself into it, produce a cigar, strike a match and start the engine.

As with all old smokers this produces a train of reflection. He goes back to the moment when he opened his eyes on board the dahabeah and met his friends, Sandy and Mr. Grimes. Then it is easy to follow the track of events down to the present, and there are several places where Joe lingers tenderly.

What a strange series of adventures he looks back upon.

“And the end is not yet,” he mutters, as he contemplates the past through the halo of the blue



smoke that circles around him, "for, unless I'm deucedly mistaken, there's going to be a continuation of this warfare. It may extend even to India's coral strand, if this little beast of a baron makes up his mind that he's bound to possess Molly. Right now and here I make a vow that such a thing shall never be. Molly belongs to him— The deuce! I'll see him hanged first. And yet I don't underrate the fellow. He's dangerous as a dynamite bomb, and must be handled with extreme care.

This is Joe's way to a dot. He is known as a brave but a careful man, one not called a Hotspur in any sense of the word, and yet ready to lead a forlorn hope or attempt a most perilous mission. In battle his strong right arm has been worth half a dozen ordinary men, and those under whom he fought have been accustomed to depend on him when difficulties arose.

He smokes and ponders.

Somehow the business makes him a trifle drowsy, and he thinks he might as well lie down for a spell. It will be several hours before day comes, and there can be no telling what may occur to exhaust him ere another opportunity occurs to get any sleep.

Rising, he tosses the butt of his cigar out of the window. At the same time he stands there and glances around.

The poor apology for an Egyptian moon has reached a respectable point up in the heavens, and as Joe looks out, he can see the grand plaza before him. Beyond are white-walled houses, the gleaming domes of mosques and needle-like minarets, from



which perchance at sunrise the *muczzin* will be calling all the faithful Mussulmans to prayer.

Giving a yawn, he looks down and notes that the ground is not so far below but what an agile man could jump to it safely.

Then Mynheer Joe throws himself upon the clean bed. It feels very comfortable, and he gives a grunt of satisfaction. It is not very often a man of his calling finds a chance to rest upon such a couch. More generally he lies upon a bed of leaves or the hard side of a plank on board some exploring boat. Certainly, Joe has been given no cot of roses while with Gordon in Khartoom. This fact does not prevent a traveller used to roughing it from enjoying a soft thing when chance throws it in his way.

He finds his senses fading, and then all becomes blank as sleep overpowers him. The hour passes on. All is silence around the famous hostelry save for the discordant barking of mangy curs upon the streets—a sound every sojourner in the land of Egypt becomes accustomed to, as it is unmercifully dinned into his ears in every city of size.

Mynheer Joe has moved restlessly several times as though his dreams take him back to the exciting scenes at the beleaguered city on the Nile.

Suddenly his eyes fly open. Could that be the effect of a vivid dream or did he really hear a sibilant whisper :

“Mynheer Joe, awake! Danger!”

Never in all his life has this man of iron nerve been more completely aroused. He lies there as still as a rock, and yet with his senses and nerves on the *qui vive*.



Ha! Is that a sound that reaches him from the direction of the window? Gently he raises his head to look. What he sees in that one glance is quite enough to take away an ordinary man's breath.







## CHAPTER X.

### PLAYING TEN-PINS WITH A HUMAN BALL.

The head of a man is outlined in the window—features are invisible, for it is only a silhouette against the background formed by the moonlight without. Evidently the unknown has some of the climbing qualities of an ape, since he has clambered up the face of a wall ten feet in height, aided by only a few running vines.

Mynheer Joe shuts his teeth together with a click, and then, turning partly over, coolly watches the window, not forgetting to breathe regularly, as a sleeping person might.

The head remains stationary for perhaps a minute, and it is evident that the man is bending his ear to listen eagerly. Then the head vanishes once more.

Joe takes advantage of the respite to change his position still more, assuming one where he can concentrate all his muscles into giving a tremendous leap. Then he calmly awaits the turn of events.

Before long the head reappears again, this time seeming to have more confidence than on the pre-



vious occasion. Nor does the man stop there—his shoulders appear and gradually he pushes his way up over the sill of the window. Ah, he is coming in, this uninvited guest !

Now he has passed the Rubicon and crouches upon the floor—Joe can just see him in the moonlight and at the same time notes another fact that fills him with wonder : A second head has bobbed up beyond the level line of the sill. Again he has the dark silhouette against the light background.

“Confusion !” thinks the traveller. “Are my apartments about to be invaded by an army? Has El Mahdi sent his advance guard against Cairo, or are they just common, every-day robbers bent on plunder?”

He is not the man to lose time in useless speculation. Precious seconds are passing, and something must be done at once ere more of his unknown enemies gain the room.

Fortunately, this man is accustomed to meeting emergencies, and thinks very little of it under ordinary circumstances. His plan of action is very simple and characteristic of his nature.

The recumbent form upon the couch becomes imbued with sudden life. It is as if steel springs have been given to it. A stone could not be shot from a catapult with greater rapidity than he passes through space.

There is hardly a sound heard to indicate his coming, and the crouching wretch upon the floor cannot have sufficient warning to get out of the way. He hears a rushing noise, and then something falls upon him, just as the eagle swoops on its prey.



A brief struggle ensues, during which the unknown emits several cries of rage. The man at the window hardly knows what to do, as he cannot tell the exact status of things inside, but believing his assistance may be needed, he starts to crawl over the sill.

At this instant something comes against him with crushing force. It is the body of his companion, whom Mynheer Joe has bodily raised, with all the strength of his powerful arms, and tossed toward the opening.

This concussion proves too much for the fellow who is in the act of clambering in. He loses his hold, clutches at the body of his companion, and, locked in each other's arms, they go plunging down to the flags below. Joe hears the thud of their fall, and immediately looks out of the window. He sees a writhing mass below. Then a man scrambles to his feet and scuttles across the open, looking more like a skulking jackal than aught else.

A groan from below. The second fellow is picking himself up now. He, too, moves off with a painful limp, as though his fall had given him cause for suffering. Mynheer Joe laughs aloud in a mocking way.

"Come again, my friends! The latch-string is always out!" he calls softly.

There is no answer. And the second skulking form hides itself, as did the first, among the shadows on the other side of the plaza.

The traveller still leans from his window and ponders. There is something about this business that puzzles him, and causes his brow to assume a seri-



ous, thoughtful expression. What did these men seek—his money or his life? The first thought is of course that they were ordinary robbers. Cairo swarms with them in spite of military precaution; and there is no more cunning thief in all the world than he of Egypt—he can give his fellows all over the globe points and beat them.

A second idea that has flashed into Joe's mind is connected with the False Prophet. El Mahdi has emissaries in Cairo. Can it be that already the word has been passed among them to do him to death—him, the sole foreign survivor of the Khar-toom massacre?

Even this, though singular, seems to be near the truth, and yet Mynheer Joe has a third idea. He gropes after it in darkness, not being able to grasp the details and make a connected theory of it.

“Well?” comes in a calm voice not more than five feet away from his ears, causing Joe to turn his head immediately.

He sees a human head in the moonlight, thrust from an adjoining window. It is Mr. Grimes who has spoken. Then Joe remembers the peculiar circumstances of his awakening. Could it be possible after all that he heard a voice whisper:

“Mynheer Joe, awake—danger!”

“They have gone but are not forgotten,” murmurs Mr. Grimes, humorously.

“You saw them, then?” asks Joe, quickly.

“Well, rather,” replies the other, chuckling; “and if that last fellow don't feel sore to-morrow, I'm mistaken in my guess.”



"I hope he will—it may lead me to identify the rascal. Mr. Grimes?"

"Yes."

"Was it you who warned me?"

"I whispered through a crack in the wall in about the spot I believed your bed to be."

"A thousand thanks, my dear sir. When I awoke I hardly knew whether I had dreamed it or not. Then my eye caught the fellow's head at the window. I waited until he crawled in and then doubled both up together."

"Very neatly done, sir, I must say. These rascally thieves are very daring just at present."

"I have been thinking it over, and had about come to the conclusion that these fellows were bent upon something else."

"Eh! You mean murder? That they are some of the Mahdi's followers or spies, determined to have vengeance on you for the part you took at Khartoom?" says Mr. Grimes.

"Perhaps so. Are you dressed, sir?"

"Partially so. I couldn't sleep and was looking out of the window from an easy-chair when I heard a noise and caught sight of the sly rascals climbing up the wall like a couple of monkeys. I was puzzled at first how to warn you, and only hit upon that little scheme as a happy thought. Glad to know it worked so well."

"Would you mind coming into my room?"

"Not at all," responds the *pseudo* silver king, cheerfully. "I'm always at the service of my friends, and particularly Mynheer Joe."



"I want to investigate something—think I've got a clew to a still darker piece of business."

"Good for you, my boy!"

Mr. Grimes's head vanishes from the window. When, a few minutes later, he opens the door of Joe's room, which the latter has unfastened, he finds that worthy has lighted a lamp, with which the room is fortunately provided in place of the ordinary candle.

Mynheer Joe seems to be bending low, as if examining something on the floor. Has the man upon whom he pounced been wounded, and does Joe think he can learn anything from the stains left behind.

As Mr. Grimes bends over his shoulder, he makes a discovery that forces an exclamation from his lips. Upon the floor can be seen the fragments of a small vial that has evidently been shattered by some violent concussion. This, in itself, is not what wrenches that cry from the detective. He sees the matting covering the floor discolored and eaten into by some powerful agent.

"What do you say?" asks Joe, solemnly.

Mr. Grimes rubs one finger over the ruined matting and feels the result almost immediately.

"There can be no question about the nature of that acid," he replies, and his whole manner is sober, as though he realizes the extreme gravity of the situation.

Mynheer Joe nods his head.

"It is the proof I was looking for. My suspicions now have a double foundation. I no longer grope in the dark—I see."

"One thing is as evident to me as the nose on your



face. You have a foe who would hesitate at nothing in order to gain revenge. A fiend in mortal shape for whom the tortures of the Inquisition would be too good."

"Exactly! You understand, this party does not yet seek my death, but would make me a hideous object for life, from whom women, and one woman in particular, must turn with shuddering horror."

"Good Heavens, Joe, can you mean it?"

"Does not the evidence point that way! The one woman to whom I have reference—let me be plain in this—is Molly Tanner. Who is it hates me because *she* smiles on me. You, yourself, told me this baron was a human fiend who had fought numerous duels and who looked upon the lives of his fellows as mere stepping-stones by means of which he could climb upward!"

"Perhaps you are right, sir," says Grimes, reflectively.

He cannot quite come to the conviction that a white man could be guilty of such a dastardly piece of business.

"And I grow more positive of it with every breath that I draw. I have not yet told you of the first cause for such a suspicion that came to me," pursues Joe, in the earnest way that marks his advance always.

"Suppose you do."

"When I jumped on the fellow who was crouching here, I must have sent this vial flying from his hand—see where it struck the wall and was smashed. My idea, of course, was to clutch him and toss the rascal through the open window, but he squirmed like an



eel, and hence I was compelled to deal him several good blows about the ribs to quiet him. It was during the progress of this little campaign that the fellow gave utterance to several cries. It was not a Moor nor an Arab nor yet a fellah who called out, but a Hindoo beseeching Brahma to save him from the foreign devil."

Mr. Grimes gives vent to an expression that marks his surprise, and yet, being a very conservative man, he is not wholly ready to agree with his friend.

"You are sure there could be no mistake?" he asks, realizing what this discovery on the part of Mynheer Joe really means.

"I can stake my life on it. Having travelled over India and spent much time among the natives, I am competent to judge. The man I tossed out of the window as though he were a bundle of sticks was beyond all question a Hindoo, and the only one I have met in all Cairo has been the man whom you pointed out as a follower of the baron, who was to prove so valuable to him when he reached the land of the Ganges."

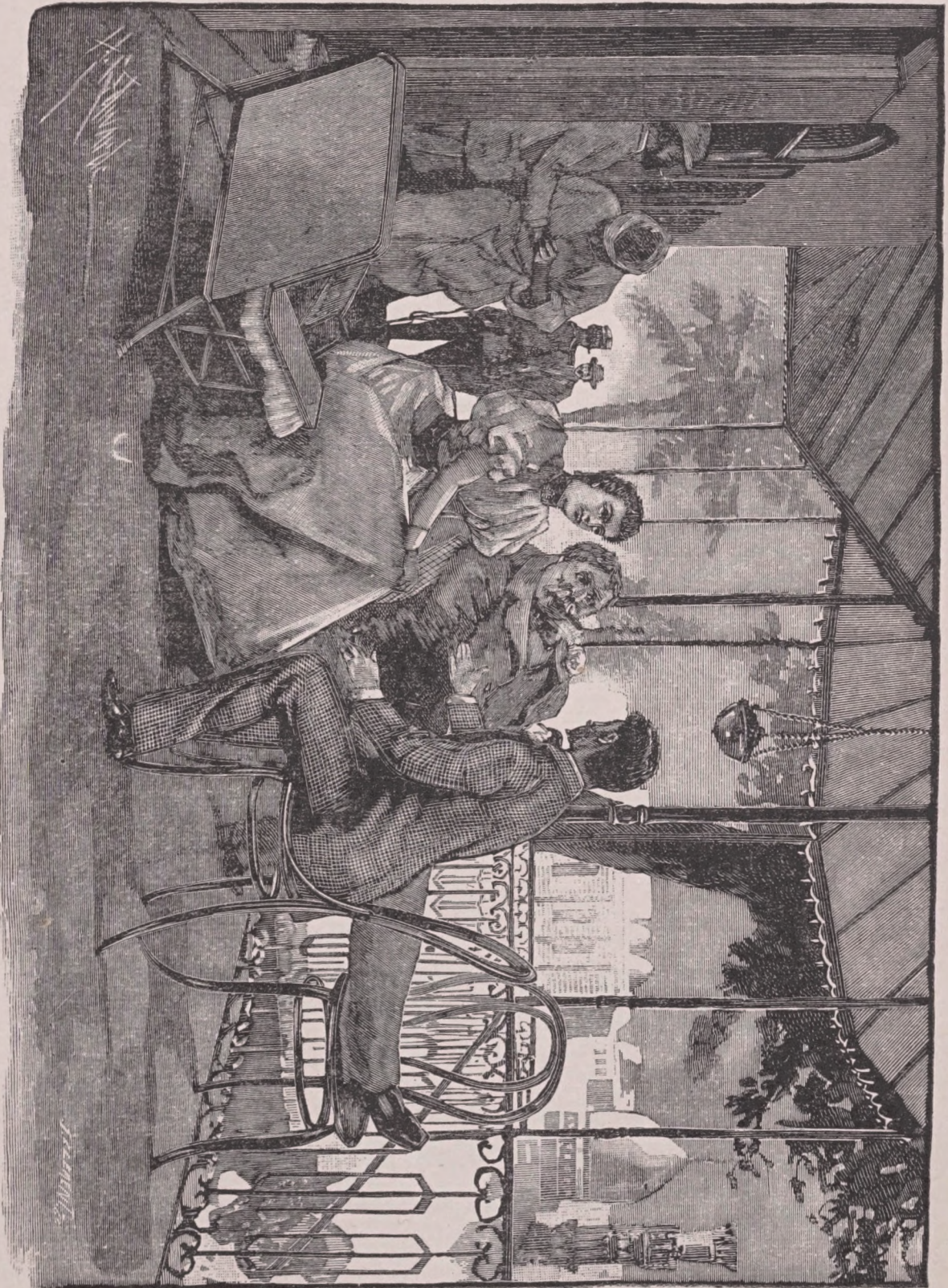
"Then I must believe it—that baron is a fiend in his way. He has a long head, too, for already has he seen that you are the man destined to give him the most trouble in connection with Molly, and he would in the start knock you out of the race."

Mynheer Joe shrugs his shoulders.

"I see very plainly that I shall have to be the death of this baron yet, or else he must take my life. Think of it, man: Ten hours ago I did not know



MYNHEER JOE NARRATES HOW GORDON HELD KHARTOOM.—See Chapter X.









he existed ; now the world is too small for both of us to live."

"Astonishing ! Never heard of such a rapid advance in my life !" declares the other.

"And yet it is perfectly legitimate. You understand that there is a difference here. I have known Molly, in one sense, much longer than this man has ; yes, and have had a claim upon her gratitude, something to keep her mind fixed upon me, so that she recognized me at sight. Something tells me this baron and myself will yet meet face to face as foes."

"If you do, I trust your good angel will be hovering near to guard and protect. The baron is an exceedingly dangerous man. I have been watching him at my lesiure here, and learned enough to tell me that he is unscrupulous and crafty ; besides, his government has surrounded him with a bulwark of defense. You must not underrate this man, my friend, whatever else you do. He is in the habit of having his own way with men. I have seen numbers of those whom I believed to be at least ordinarily brave men bow and smile before him, as though they actually feared his power."

"Bah ! That is not in Mynheer Joe's line at all. I am an American, and I bend my head to no man in obeisance, with all respect to the crowned heads of Europe. Let the fight come off. We shall see who wins."

The baron will, at least, have an adversary in Mynheer Joe who knows no fear—one who has met danger in all its guises and wrested victory from many a threatened defeat. When two such men



meet in deadly array, the result is sure to be interesting—to those who may look on as spectators.

Mr. Grimes cautions his friend to sleep with one eye open after this.

“Do you know what I’ve a notion to do?” says Joe, deliberately. “Gather up the remains of this broken vial, wrap them up securely, and, by special messenger, send them to the baron in the morning, with some such line as this: ‘First attempt a failure. Try again, dear baron.’ Or perhaps I might say: ‘If you could only have seen the chap who carried this plunge through the window, baron!’”

Mynheer Joe is inclined to be facetious, but his companion looks further and sees more clearly.

“That would be imprudent, my friend,” he says.

“Tell me exactly how.”

“Well, you unmask your batteries and let him know that you have discovered his advance. That is what we call bad policy in a game.”

“Ah, yes, I begin to see already.”

“Far better to keep him in ignorance, and then you have the advantage. He may never know that you suspect him. Let it be set down that some rascally robbers attempted to get in your room and you fired ‘em out.”

“I had an idea, you understand, that by letting this man know I was on to his game I could hold him responsible for the future.”

“Nonsense! The baron would be responsible for nothing. He’s as slippery as an eel. Depend upon it, you can’t meet him squarely. But if you ever get the better of him, it will be by using his own weapons.”



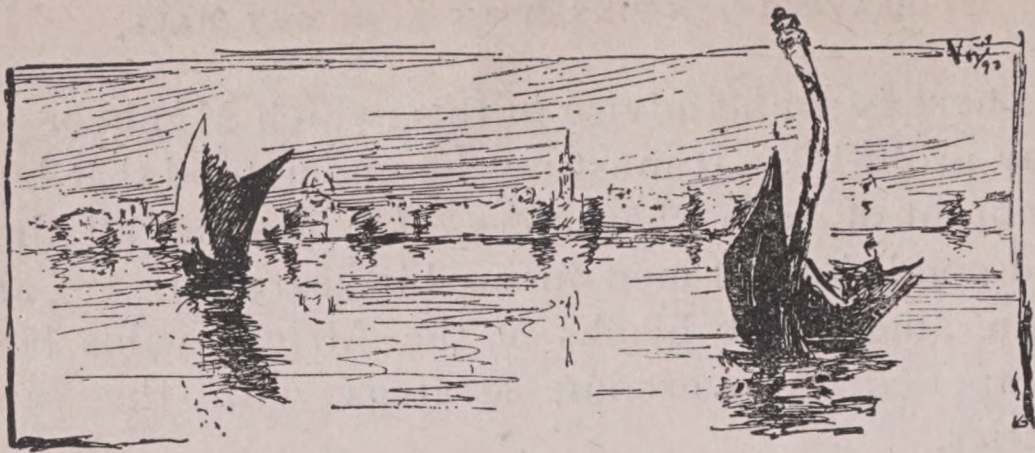
There is sound advise in this, which Mynheer Joe may profit by. It must not be understood that he is ignorant of such characters. He has met all kinds and conditions of men during his years of travel, and even among the blacks of the African wilds been compelled to overcome strategy with the same tactics.

After a little more talk, Mr. Grimes retires to his room, and Mynheer Joe throws himself down upon his cot again. It is hardly probable that the same intruders will attempt anything more in that line, at least not on this night.

So the explorer takes cat-naps until morning comes. Then he finds the sky ablaze as the sun rises in a sea of red—a spectacle that is awe-inspiring in its grandeur. Being a lover of nature, Mynheer Joe gloats over the view and regrets to see the bright colors fade away.

Another day in Egypt has begun, a day of sight-seeing to the many travellers who come to feast their eyes on storied Nile, majestic pyramids, wonderful ruins, strange tombs hewn in the rocks of the Mokkatam Hills above Cairo, and, above all, the massive Sphinx, that guards the remains of a temple under the sand—a day that may have much to do with the fortunes of Mynheer Joe and those he calls friends.





## CHAPTER XI.

COMING EVENTS CAST A SHADOW BEFORE.

Shepherd's is astir.

Parties are sallying forth, equipped for sight-seeing. Some go by the river, while others mount donkeys, according to what they mean to gaze upon. The scene in front of the hotel is once more one of confusion. Finely dressed dragomans are bustling about, ordering the donkey-boys this way and that, and assuming an air of most tremendous importance. Indeed, it could be easily imagined that some great Eastern potentate is about to set out on a most wonderful journey, to see the excitement that reigns in front of the hotel.

Every day, during the winter season, it is the same. These tourists, principally English and American, who make the rounds of Egypt, leave a large sum of money behind them, and if a year comes when some dread disease keeps the tide of travel away, there will be mourning in the land of



the khedive among Turk, Arab, Moor and native fellahin.

Mynheer Joe, after breakfast, is seated where he may watch this panorama and enjoy its peculiar features as only one can who is a veteran traveller or has no business on hand.

While Joe sits upon the piazza he sees one approaching whose coming fires his heart. Of course, it is Molly—no one else could make his blood leap so madly. She reaches his side, and Mynheer Joe is on his feet instantly, offering her a chair. He makes a move to toss his weed away, but she calls out:

“Refrain! I know it would give you pain in the first place, and in the open air I really enjoy the odor of a good cigar,” she laughs.

He looks at his weed doubtfully.

“This is Turkish tobacco and has a fine reputation, but I rather prefer the American when I can get it, or Havana, which is the same thing. However, since you are so kind, I will keep it, and take a seat to leeward,” which he does with much pleasure.

She does not look as though bent upon a mission of reproach. Joe takes courage and boldly opens the game himself.

“You have learned the truth, Miss Molly. I was in the act of confessing, myself, when the baron and his friend interrupted us.”

“Yes, I know all about it,” she replies, nodding.

“And you don’t bear malice?” eagerly.

“How could I—against the one who saved my life—and under such extraordinary circumstances as this thing was done, too. No, since my father has



forgiven you, I will not be backward about doing the same. Besides, he firmly believes that you saved his life, in some way that he would not explain."

It is evident that Molly does not know all, and is ignorant that the baron is the prime cause of this trouble. Some men would have taken solid satisfaction in informing her as to the truth, and with good reason, too ; but Mynheer Joe seems to be above it.

"Let us drop the whole matter, Miss Molly," he says, quite willing it shall be forgotten.

She looks at him a little queerly, for it has already occurred to her woman's mind that there is something back of it all which she had not yet fathomed—something concerning an unknown quantity, the terrible danger at which her father has hinted without giving any details ; and like others of the human family, Miss Molly is gifted with a certain amount of curiosity, that trait not wholly confined to her sex.

"Very well, it shall be just as you say, on one condition, Mynheer Joe," she replies.

"What is that ?" he asks.

"Some time you will tell me what this danger is that hangs over the governor's head."

"Yes, I promise, but it is no longer there, I assure you," he makes answer.

They drift on to general topics, and then Demosthenes Tanner's voice is heard in the land, as he figuratively demolishes a clumsy waiter who has had the misfortune to step on his pet corn.

He joins them and greets them with a warmth, that proves his mind has undergone no change, since



they parted on the previous night. Turning his head right and left, he shows that it is still in a serviceable condition.

"A little stiff in the neck, that's all, my boy. Wonderful stuff, hammamelis! Only for my having a bottle along, I'd have been laid up for a week. Jove! Feel that muscle! Like steel! I say, this business of exploring the wilds is no child's play, after all. Is it?"

He rattles on, drawing two chairs up, placing his feet on one, and bringing into view an enormous cigar, which must have been made especially for a man of his size.

So Joe has to describe, how, on many an occasion, he and his men have been compelled to actually hew a way through a dense network of vines and fallen trees, that covered the stream they were navigating.

By degrees, they get him to Khartoom, and as he had promised Tanner the story of that doomed city's fall, he proceeds to give a graphic description of what took place, from the time of Gordon's arrival up to the ill-fated 26th of January, when the Christian hero fell, a martyr to political hesitation at home, betrayed by those in whom he trusted.

Mynheer Joe would speak as little as possible of his own share in these tragic events, but they draw him out, and he is thus compelled to tell what happened.

While Molly sits there, her lovely eyes glued on the face of the speaker, deep admiration and even growing love kindling her fine features, the baron



glares at the group from the other end of the piazza.

He realizes that the fates have dealt him a terrible blow, and that his case is indeed hopeless, unless fortune throws in his way a means of overturning circumstances.

The baron chances to be one of those men who imagine that the battle is won by the party who fights for victory ; therefore he will not be apt to sit around with his hands in his pockets.

Already he has proven to what end he can be driven by necessity. None but a desperate fiend would ever think of getting a dangerous rival out of the way by such a plan as ruining his looks with acid. This same man is fertile in resources and dangerous as a foe. Mynheer Joe may learn to his cost that he was really safer among the howling, maddened dervishes of the Mahdi than he is in Cairo to-day.

When the spectacle grows too bitter for him to longer gaze upon, the baron walks away, muttering to himself.

Mr. Grimes has from a place of concealment been watching this game, and chuckles when he notes the diplomat's discomfiture. Still keeping his eye upon him, he sees the baron signal a French ex-army-officer, who has some connection with the khedive's palace, being in his employ.

These two talk long and earnestly, during which the baron glances a number of times toward the trio on the piazza, and even the Frenchman looks earnestly that way.

"Some deviltry afoot," mutters Mr. Grimes.



"I'd give a little to be able to hear what is said, but must find out the truth in another way."

Watching the couple, he finally sees them shake hands heartily; the French officer bows, places a hand on his heart, makes a gesture and walks away. Whatever has been the purport of their conversation, the matter has undoubtedly been arranged.

As the baron passes Mr. Grimes, the latter quietly follows him, making sure to attract no attention. In this way he sees the Russian diplomat finally enter a peculiar house, which has something of the appearance of a gymnasium.

Loitering around, Mr. Grimes discovers an English gentleman, whom he knows, about to enter. He stops him, to ask a question, and learns that the building is an athletic club-room. His friend asks him to enter, which he willingly does, for this is exactly what he wants.

A number of men are within. Some box; others leap and swing dumb-bells; while not a few use the foils. Mr. Grimes discovers the baron, dressed in a suit that is worn in the exercise, about to enter into an engagement with one of the professors. The sight somehow makes him jump at conclusions. Does the baron contemplate a duel? Since his villainous plan to destroy Joe's looks has failed, will he endeavor to put the dashing explorer out of the way by a recourse to arms and the code of honor?

Mr. Grimes knows that this man has been a principal in many duels—that he is an expert swordsman and a dead shot. His size, instead of being against him, really gives him an advantage.



Hence Mynheer Joe's friend watches the work of the baron closely. Mr. Grimes is no swordsman himself, but he can tell good wrist-play, lunge and parry when he sees it.

Before five minutes pass by he realizes that the baron is simply immense. He plays with the professor as a cat might with a mouse, and, whenever he feels in the humor, dazzles the man's eyes with a flashing wall of steel, plucks his foil out of his grasp by a wonderful wrench, and laughs in a cold-blooded, sardonic way that sets Grimes wild.

Heaven help poor Mynheer Joe, he thinks, if he stands before this little giant with a sword in his hand! There is just about one chance in a dozen for him. He may outwit the baron in diplomacy, but cold steel held in the grasp of a wizard is a hard thing to beat.

So Mr. Grimes watches and shudders, as, in imagination, he sees his friend occupying the place of the professor. Before now, under such circumstances, the baron's cruel blade would have passed through his body.

Mr. Grimes studies his method, hoping to find a weak spot. As has already been said he has considerable knowledge of the science, and after a time jumps at a conclusion.

"Heavens! This man, wonderful as he is, would stand a poor show against a left-handed swordsman! I have seen Joe do a number of things with his left hand. If he handles a sword in that way—well, Mr. Baron, you may be astonished—that's all."

When the baron has enjoyed himself to the full with the professor, who is but a plaything in his



hands, he saunters over to the shooting-gallery to try his hand.

One would think his nerves might not be as steady as could be desired after his hot engagement with the foils, and Mr. Grimes feels an admiration for the man coupled with his aversion, when he sees him send shot after shot with astonishing accuracy, the various swinging targets being struck almost with every discharge of the revolver.

“A dangerous combination of a man to be at large, capable of doing a tremendous amount of mischief in the world, and the sooner he turns up his toes under the sod the better for humanity” is the mental comment of Mr. Grimes.

He meets the baron at the bar of the gallery, in a friendly spirit, and wishing to see more of his pistol practice soon banters him into a little wager. Mr. Grimes has always prided himself on his marksmanship, but he has a poor show beside this man of the quick eye and steady hand.

His main object is to discover whether the baron has any weak point about his marksmanship, so that he can turn it to good account. Even in this a fair measure of success falls to his share, enough to pay him from his trouble. At fifteen and twenty-five paces the Russian duelist is almost a dead shot, but strange to say the American beats him at twenty paces. It would be hard to understand just why this is so, and to make sure of it Mr. Grimes is not content with the one trial but goes through it all again.

The result is the same.

That settles it. If there is to be an exchange of



shots between the rivals, it must be at twenty paces. He feels that he is doing only what is right in learning these facts. Doubtless this man without a conscience has in times past spitted more than one unlucky devil on his sword, who proved to be a boor at the *duello*, and against whom he had a grudge. He deserves neither sympathy nor pity, and such a man asks nothing of the world.

Perhaps the baron has already sized up the other and remembers that he saw him with the man he plots to destroy. That does not appear to disturb him very much; indeed, he may even take a savage satisfaction in showing the American how he will make crow's meat of his friend when the time comes.

Mr. Grimes has seen enough.

At his first opportunity he must warn Joe, so that the other may not stumble into the pit which the baron would dig for him, at least without a knowledge of the consequences.

After leaving the gymnasium where the stalwart British officers spend an hour or so every day, he looks around for the explorer, but can see nothing of him. Molly and her distinguished father are also among the missing. Presently he runs across some one he knows.

"Ah! there, Sandy, my boy, where away?" he calls out, whereat the bustling little correspondent brought in a heap consents to halt briefly.

"Off to wire for a passage on the bi-monthly steamer for India. Touches at Alexandria, you know, and then direct to Port Said for the Canal."

"When is it due?"



"The *Alhambra* arrives on Saturday."

"Secure passage for me, but hold on; perhaps you'd better wait and see. I understand Tanner and his daughter, together with Mynheer Joe, are heading in that direction. If we all go on one steamer, it will make a jolly party."

Sandy strikes an attitude.

"Bless you, that's a fact. I'll wait until we have a little consultation, and abide by the result. By the way the baron goes on her."

"I supposed as much. How did you find that out, Sandy, my boy?" queries the other.

"I heard him give orders this morning. Several parties accompany him."

"Who took the order?"

"The fellow looking like a Hindoo."

Mr. Grimes smiles.

"I wish you had noticed that fellow closely," Sandy," he remarks, quietly.

"Well, now, that's just what I did. You see he had a lordly air yesterday, as though he owned the whole of Egypt, while this morning he limped painfully, had a bruise on his forehead, and his left arm was tied up in a great ball of cotton, while his face had a look as though intense pain and devilish fury were fighting for the mastery."

At this Mr. Grimes no longer smiles. He chuckles.

"Something has evidently befallen the rascally Brahmin since night closed in. What did you conclude was the matter?" he asks.

"Well, I thought the fellow had evidently been barking up the wrong tree," says Sandy, solemnly.



This time Grimes laughs aloud.

"Good guess, my boy. He owes the goose-egg on his forehead, the halt in his gait and the bandaged arm to someone we know."

"Ten to one it was that Mynheer Joe!" exclaimed the correspondent, quickly.

"Go up head, young man. You are an ornament to the guessing class. Sure enough, it was our Joseph who handled the Thug without gloves. The beast was on a mission for his master, and was thrown through the window by the messenger from Khartoom."

Of course Sandy pricks his ears up at this chance for a sensation, and plies the other with questions, which Mr. Grimes answers to the best of his ability. The story is soon told, and followed by what he has, this morning, seen the baron do—exercise his skill with sword and revolver, as though there is work ahead.

"As sure as you live, it 's going to be nip and tuck between those two yet. I'm ready to bet on Joe; but I admit the case is awfully doubtful, with that human devil against him. Still Joe's star of luck has never yet deserted him. He 's the only foreigner to come out of Khartoom alive. Let us hope and pray he will finally outwit that baron and carry off the prize."

Sandy has never been more earnest in all his life, and if something would only come up whereby he could show his friendship, he stands ready to chip in, no matter what the cost.

Thus Joe's friends talk over matters and endeavor to discover some way whereby the explorer can be



benefited. They feel sure the baron has made up his mind to push matters to the wall, and that he will not hesitate about the means he employs.

If Joe is challenged, of course, he may have the choice of weapons, time and place. He can, therefore, make the best of the bargain. The one thing they fear is that the baron may arrange it so that the insult comes from him. Well, if so, Joe will probably avenge it on the spot and not dream of sending in a challenge.

Thus they draw consolation from the situation and hope for the best.

Where can Joe have taken himself to? They fail to find anything of him, nor do they see Tanner and his daughter. This delay is not to Sandy's liking, as he is anxious to send a telegram to the city on the Mediterranean, engaging his passage for India, and frets under the lapse of time.

The morning has gone and the afternoon with it.

It is evening when the two friends run across Tanner in the hotel—Tanner, who greets them in his usual boisterous manner, as he does all his friends.

Sandy sees his opportunity and makes the best possible use of it. He asks the orator his intentions about travel, and hints at how nice it would be if all of them could go on the same steamer to India, which proposition quite takes the other by storm.

Making inquiries as to date of sailing and a few other things, Tanner figures on his own plans, and then announces that Sandy may include himself and daughter in the party.

“How about Mynheer Joe?”



"You'll have to see him personally," returns the orator, with a sly twinkle in his eyes, as though he can make a pretty good guess that the party mentioned will not be far away when they leave Alexandria.

"Where may he be found?" asks Sandy.

"Think I know. You see a party of English officers and leading men were bound to fete the brave boy who came from Khartoom with the last news of poor Gordon. They took him over to the barracks, where a spread had been ordered. I was pressed to go, but Molly would be waiting for me at the hotel here, and as I am a dutiful parent and never disappoint her, I gave up the idea."

Sandy has a cloud on his brow.

"How long ago since the party went in?"

"More than half an hour, I reckon," replies Tanner, consulting his time-piece.

"They must have reached the wine and cigars."

"Very probably."

"Mr. Tanner, was the baron present?"

"Certainly. That man is everywhere!" It is evident that he does not bear malice against the baron, or at least fails to show it.

Sandy and Mr. Grimes exchange glances.

"It will be done there?" says the latter.

"No doubt of it, sir," replies the correspondent.

"What's all this about?" asks Tanner, noticing their peculiar nods and glances.

"We're off to see if Joe goes with us or stays in Cairo."

And with the words the two friends leave Tanner, heading for the barracks.

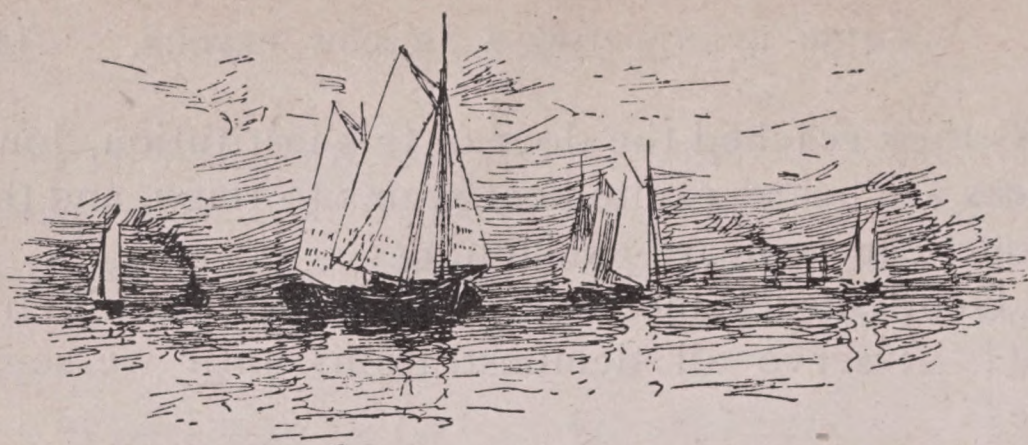


As they reached the door of this institution, loud voices are heard, excitement seems to reign, and the colonel can be heard exclaiming :

“ Gentlemen, remember you are under a military roof ! Reserve all demonstrations until we separate ! ”







## CHAPTER XII.

“WITH SWORDS—AN HOUR AFTER SUNRISE!”

The words are deeply significant and Sandy clutches his companion's arm; the look exchanged between the two denotes that they understand the true inwardness of this affair; it hardly needs the glance they take into the mess-room to corroborate their suspicions.

It is a scene they will never forget as long as they live. A dozen or more officers and gentlemen have been at the table; the cloth is removed and cigars with wine served. At one side of the colonel stands Mynheer Joe, the hero of Khartoom; he holds an empty wine-glass in his hand, while upon his face can be seen a contemptuous look. His eyes are bent across the table.

Nearly opposite to him is the baron. With a snowy handkerchief he wipes the wine from his face; it has also discolored his shirt-front where blazes a wonderful diamond, worth a small fortune.

Sandy observes his face and discovers hardly a trace of anger there; indeed, from the sardonic



smile, one would imagine that this incident is just what the Russian duelist has played for.

Returning the soiled kerchief to his pocket, he coolly tosses his card across the table in the direction of Mynheer Joe.

“ You will speedily hear from me, sir,” he says, with cutting emphasis.

“ The sooner the better, baron! Remember, I leave on Saturday’s steamer,” returns the American, while the officers look astounded; for, brave men though they are, there is not one among them who would care to be in Joe’s shoes.

The Russian bows and leaves the room: he can no longer remain at the table with the man who has thus publicly insulted him, and as Mynheer Joe is the guest of the occasion, it becomes his duty to depart from the mess-table.

Sandy is joined by one of the officers, a fine young fellow, who has taken quite a fancy to the war correspondent. The latter declares it will be his pleasant duty to see Lieutenant Hans Fletcher become a general some day. He has the greatest faith in his dashing qualities.

“ Tell us, how did this ugly affair come about?” he asks, eagerly, for those at the mess-table appear to have forgotten it in listening to Joe’s glowing story of Gordon’s death.

“ Willingly—what little I know,” replies the British officer. “ I was at the other end of the table and failed to distinctly catch the full meaning of the baron’s insult.”

“ Then he brought it on purposely, as I supposed.”



"We suspect as much, though his reason is no plain. Perhaps you gentlemen know it."

"The same old story—rivals in love."

"Ah! That's the truth of it, eh?"

"Was the baron's remark about Miss Tanner?"

"I am glad to say it was not. From the little I heard, I believe it concerned Mynheer Joe's country—some insulting allusion to the flag that covers our cousins across the water."

"Good! And Joe resented it, as any true American would, no matter if his death was a foregone conclusion," says Sandy, hotly.

"But, you see, it's a serious thing to bring on a row at the colonel's mess-table."

"And a still more serious thing to be publicly insulted there. The colonel should have seen to it that only gentlemen were invited and not the miserable hound who thinks his title of baron can cover up all his iniquities."

The lieutenant glances rather nervously around, hoping no friend of the baron will overhear what is being said by the fiery little correspondent, or there may be a double duel on the *tapis*.

"Honestly, now, lieutenant, if you had been at the mess-table of a German regiment, an invited and honored guest, and this man should say exactly the same against your flag that he did against our stars and stripes, what would have been your action?" pursues Sandy.

The officer bites his military mustache.

"Really, my dear fellow, you have me. There would be but one course for me to pursue, and that



to cast his slur in his teeth, as a brave man like Mynheer Joe has done.”

“Exactly! I knew it! Then blame him no more, but rather honor his daring. When this cur had given the insult—what then?”

“Every eye was turned on Mynheer Joe, for we all understood what was meant. I saw him shut his teeth hard, but only a slight frown passed over his bronzed face. Leaning over the table, he looked the baron full in the eye and said calmly: ‘I return the compliment, baron. That flag could never wave over the land that harbors a Siberia!’ And quick as a flash he emptied his wine-glass full into the other’s face.”

Sandy’s face glows with enthusiasm. He is proud of his countryman. A few more such men as Mynheer Joe scattered about the world would cause a greater respect for the stars and stripes among the nations of Europe.

He looks at the explorer, and does not see that Joe is impressed with the danger into which he has been thus drawn by circumstances.

“I have great confidence in his ability, and his lucky star seems in the ascendant,” he remarks, at which the officer says in a low tone:

“Privately, between us, Sandy, I earnestly hope he will do the baron. Besides the regard we feel for him as a cousin from across the water and the man who avenged Gordon, you understand that we have no love for the Russian, whose mission to India we cansuspect.”

“Yes, and it’s my private opinion that when he



runs up against Joe he'll wish he had taken some other course."

It is a good thing to have a sanguine friend, but Sandy does not deceive himself. He knows what the other has to face as well as Mr. Grimes, who watched the baron wield a sword and shot with him at a target.

Mynheer Joe presently excuses himself from the company. They understand his going, and do not wonder at it. Any man who may be called upon at sunrise to face the Russian duelist would be a fool to stupefy his senses by lingering at a banquet-table.

He is immediately joined by Sandy and the *pseudo* silver king, and the three walk out under the stars to talk. Joe is soon informed with regard to all that Mr. Grimes has learned.

The three presently bring up at the gymnasium, for it is the wish of the latter gentleman that the explorer shall show what he can do, so a comparison may be drawn and a decision rendered as to what Joe's course must be when he receives the challenge expected.

A very few persons are present. Mr. Grimes speaks to the man in charge, and they are made welcome as friends of the officers. The same professor with whom the baron played is present, and with pleasure he agrees to fence with the American, no doubt believing he will have a chance to recover his prestige, lost in the bout with the baron that day.

When Mynheer Joe takes off his coat and vest and puts a belt around his waist, he is ready for the



affair. Upon his feet he has drawn a pair of rubber foot-holds that will keep him from slipping.

He bares his right arm, and Sandy sees the professor glance at his superb biceps as though pleased. Then the man of foils takes his wrist and feels it.

"A wonderful arm, *monsieur*," he says, with kindling eyes. "With practice you would be a magnificent swordsman."

"So old Duval used to tell me," replies Joe.

"Ah, *sacre!* You take lessons from him, ze greatest master in Paris. Perhaps I shall not be able to have ze revenge after all."

Meanwhile Joe rolls up his left shirt sleeve in the same way, an action the professor regards with concern, but which Mr. Grimes takes to mean what he has fondly hoped.

"Ready, professor?"

The foils click and begin to writhe like snakes, passing in and out with the rapidity of thought. Sandy and Mr. Grimes stand near by. They have a deeper interest in this engagement than appears on the surface.

After looking on for a minute Mr. Grimes heaves a sigh of relief.

"He'll do, Sandy. I'll stake my all on him even against the Russian. Watch that magnificent play of the wrist. Heavens! I've seen a man wield a sword before, but never like that. Hark! What does he say—that he finds himself rusty and sluggish. Deuce take it, what can he do when in trim, then? Note the poor professor. He actually looks scared. His revenge doesn't pan out very well,



does it? I think I'll have to give him a turn myself to make him feel good."

Thus the usually taciturn Mr. Grimes rattles on, while Sandy can hardly keep quiet.

"Jove! He tosses his weapon into his left hand. Again he is at the professor like a tiger. The poor devil has had the button against his heart a dozen times. What d'ye think of that left-handed play, old fellow?" laughs Sandy.

His companion squeezes his hand, for once showing excitement.

"I feel as jolly as if an old uncle had died and left me his fortune. The baron will meet his match. It will be a royal battle. No danger of our Joe getting hurt. Yes, no matter how well he uses the firearms, I shall recommend swords. The other way both may be killed; here, wounds are more possible. Swords are gentlemen's weapons truly. Look! He hunts the professor—he has him utterly demoralized—he throws down his foil and hold up his hand! Enough, gentlemen!"

It is as Mr. Grimes has said. The Frenchman has been rattled until he can no longer use his weapon. He laughs good-naturedly.

"Monsieur must have his little joke. He is rusty this night. What of *me*?" he exclaims, shaking Joe's hand.

They chat for a short time, anecdotes of the famous sword-master of the Rue de Sevres being in order. Then they sauntered over to the shooting-gallery, while Mynheer Joe does some good work. Although he knows how to handle a revolver in a way few men can equal, Mr. Grimes does not



change his mind. With the sword Joe is absolutely safe, and as much can never be said concerning pistols.

He is pleased to note, however, that at twenty paces Joe is at his best, though inferior to the baron on either side of this figure.

Then Mr. Grimes meets the professor, who has as much fun with him as he afforded Joe. The stout, red-faced traveller is not built for a swordsman, and soon tires of being driven into a corner like a rat at bay; but he has put the professor into a good humor.

The three friends pass out into the night and head toward Shepherd's close by. Again is the grand square illuminated and the clattering of many tongues heard. It is about the same, day and night, here, at times more noisy than at others, but only comparatively quiet from midnight until morning, which period the countless curs of the city select for their serenade, baying the moon, if there be one, snarling and fighting in the public square and carrying on like a pack of hyenas let loose.

As they enter the hotel, a pair of eyes fasten upon them, and a man starts forward. Mynheer Joe recognizes a French officer. It is the same whom Mr. Grimes watched in conversation with the baron the morning before. He holds something in his hand—a letter, judging from its appearance.

“Now we have it,” mutters Sandy, as he and Mr. Grimes purposely fall back a pace.

The courteous French officer bows.

“*Pardon!* Am I addressing Monsieur Miner?”

“That is my name, sir,” replies Joe, calmly.



"I have something for you, *monsieur*."

"Thanks."

He tears it open, glances at it, smiles in a careless way, and passes it to Mr. Grimes.

"You are Captain Faitoute, I presume?"

"*Oui, monsieur*, at your service," bowing.

"Captain Faitoute, my friend Colonel Grimes. He will second me. All arrangements made with him *will stand*. Good evening," and Mynheer Joe walks complacently away, followed by an admiring glance from the Frenchman, who, under his breath, mutters:

"*Parbleu!* A brave man, deserving of a better fate than a dog's death at *his* hands; but it is the decree of fortune," shrugging his shoulders.

He and "Colonel" Grimes walk aside to make all necessary arrangements. This is the first time the American has been a second in a duel, but he has a pretty fair idea as to what his duties are, and always carries a clear head upon his shoulders.

The arrangements are soon made. Joe, as the challenged party, has the choice of weapons, time and place. Swords are selected, and the officer promises to have a pair on the ground so exactly alike, that Joe shall pick his own first.

It is also arranged that the meeting occur on the Mokkatam Hills above Cairo, an hour after sunrise on the following morning. Noticing the Frenchman's look of wonder at such haste, "Colonel" Grimes adds quietly:

"My principal sails for India on Saturday, and cannot delay for any little by-play such as this. Tomorrow it must be."



"Advise him not to be too hasty in ordering his state-room, colonel. There's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip," says the Frenchman with significant meaning

"Don't worry about Mynheer Joe. I know he is able to hoe his own row, *Monsieur le Capitaine*. We meet then at daybreak on the Delhi wharf."

"Yes—the boats will be in readiness—I shall have two, because my principal may have scruples about returning alongside his victim."

Mr. Grimes laughs quietly at this thrust. He imagines there may be a surprise in store for Captain Faitoute as well as the baron, and the *pseudo*-silver king is a firm believer in the old maxim that he laughs loudest who laughs last.

So he bids the Frenchman *bon soir* and resumes his talk with Sandy, while Faitoute walks out of the hotel, looking back at the red-faced American, whose eccentricities, no doubt, have made him believe the other a *bizarre* specimen.

So it is all arranged.

Each principal is to have a second and an additional friend. The Frenchman has suggested bringing a doctor, at which Grimes smiles.

"We expect to have no need of one; but who knows? My principal would not like to have a human life on his hands, especially a white man's. Yes, bring your doctor along, with plenty of lint and bandages, for sword-wounds are sometimes ugly things."

In this way, he declares, he gave the other a Roland for an Oliver, and broke even. Sandy takes it all in eagerly. As a newspaper man, he has seen



many strange sights, but yet has never had the luck to be present at a duel. The nearest he came to it was when he endeavored to see the Bennett-May affair across the water, and arrived on the duelling-ground just in time to see the carriages drive hastily away. It begins to look as though he may now have the desired opportunity, and he means to make the most of it, as such affairs are not an everyday occurrence in these degenerate times.

Mr. Grimes, having been made a master of ceremonies, has a weight of responsibility resting on his shoulders; but he knows the best he can do at present is to see that Joe gets a decent night's sleep and is up betimes.

The *pseudo* silver king has a watch of peculiar make, with an alarm that can be set for any time, just like a clock. Placed under his pillow, it will make noise enough at the designated hour to arouse a light sleeper such as himself. He has depended on it many a time and not been disappointed.

Mynheer Joe has found Molly in the hotel parlors, and seems to be well content to pass the balance of the evening in her company, drinking the intoxicating cup of love from her clear gray eyes.

Mr. Grimes leaves him alone. This will not make his arm nervous in the morning or his eye unsteady. Better to be in her company listening to her songs than drinking with convivial companions, as the baron is doing at this same hour, playing bacarat.

The news has gone abroad—strange how such things do travel, as might the mist that comes silently in from the sea and spreads over the land like



magic. People pretty generally know that the insult has been passed between the Russian baron and the American traveller who was with Gordon in the Soudan. Knowing also the reputation one of these men has as a duelist, it is set down as certain that a meeting must take place soon.

Hence, Mynheer Joe finds himself the cynosure for many eyes, and he is annoyed at the interest people seem to take in him, but that is the fate of any one whom fortune destines to move on a higher plane than his fellows, and he must get used to it.

Molly, on her part, believing this attention is caused simply because the people have learned that he is the sole survivor of the massacre at Khar-toom, is proud of the fact that he is her friend—pleased to think he is an American, and thinks more of him than ever.

He gives no hint of what is to come off in the morning, for it is not his way to boast, and he can keep a secret. Indeed, to see how merry he appears no one would think he has anything on his mind. Those who are in the secret are amazed, and not a few make up their minds that the whole report may be a canard, for they cannot imagine a man who expects to meet the Russian baron at sunrise could be so cool about it.

The evening passes, and finally Mynheer Joe bids the ladies good night. Mr. Grimes sees that he retires to his room to get a few hours sleep. At the proper time Grimes is up and arouses both Mynheer Joe and Sandy.

Together they quietly repair to the dining-room of the hotel. A cook has been bribed to be up and



hands them each a cup of fine coffee, than which no better can be had in the world than right there at Shepherd's in Cairo.

This opens their eyes and makes them feel as though they have a warmth next their heart. Outside the poor moon hangs up in the sky, but her pale light already gives way to the coming of early morning. Soon the gathering hosts of light will rush up from their stronghold below the eastern horizon, when the rout of the night-king will be complete.

Just about this hour, Molly Tanner, dressed in a white wrapper and with her hair showering down her back, enters her father's room by means of the connecting door.

"Who's that?" asks Tanner, sitting upright, his night-cap hanging over his ear.

"Only Molly, father," comes the reply.

"What the dickens are you wandering around for? Go back to your bed, child," he says softly, for his love toward his daughter is very great.

"It is early morning. You can hear the birds twittering out in the trees. I was awake, and, catching voices, went to the window. Below I saw three men move toward the river. I am almost positive I recognized one of their voices.

"Well," grunts the orator, getting ready to resume his nap, "what of that, Molly?"

"But it was Mynheer Joe."

"Eh?"

"And I heard one of the others—I am sure it must have been Mr. Grimes—say: 'I will examine the swords. He shall have no advantage.'"



Tanner grunts again.

"Then the report was true."

"What report, governor?"

"Never mind, child. It doesn't concern you. Go back and get your beauty nap," he growls.

"Not until you tell me what this means. Three men leave the hotel at daybreak. They talk about swords. What is about to happen?"

"Bah! Some officers on a lark, perhaps."

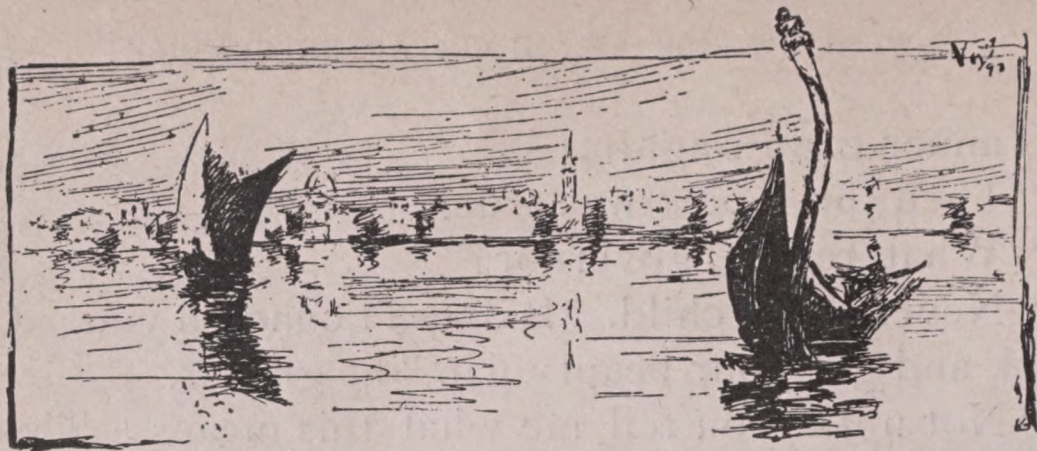
"You know better, governor. You betrayed yourself when you said the report was true. What report? It concerns Mynheer Joe. I remember now how strangely they looked at him last night."

"Confound it, child, you are a little tyrant and I a bulldozed old man! Listen, then. It was reported that Mynheer Joe and the baron were to fight a duel about sunrise this morning."

Molly covers her face with her hands and utters a low cry. Then she eagerly questions Tanner and learns all that he knows, until at last he stubbornly drops back on his pillow and feigns sleep; so there is nothing for the wretched girl to do but to return to her room, and, sitting there, await the rising of the sun, with a dumb feeling of pain at her heart.







## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE MISSION OF THE DAHABEAH.

When Mynheer Joe and his two friends, having secured a cup of coffee and a bite of breakfast at the hotel, pass down toward the river, the very first gleam of daylight is abroad, though as yet kept in the background by the moon, which shines on the land of the Pharaohs with a peculiarly dull radiance, unlike the flood of light poured upon the earth when the Queen of Night is at her full.

Knowing the way, they experience no trouble in reaching the point where they have been informed the two boats will be in readiness. This time there is no attempt made to rob them. Perhaps the rascally Arabs who prowl about the narrow streets during the night looking for victims have retired, like beasts of prey, to their various dens at the approach of dawn. At any rate, the three men meet with no adventure as they advance to the Nile.

“Here we are,” says Sandy, when they bring up at the designated spot.

Sure enough, two boats are seen upon the water, both of a trim model. Voices can be heard, as though





MYNHEER JOE HOLDS AN EMPTY WINE-GLASS.—See Chapter XII.







the sailors are on deck, and all is in readiness for casting off.

Sandy takes one look into the face of Mynheer Joe as they come upon the boats. It is enough to reassure him, for the man does not show the least emotion. If he were made of ice Mynheer Joe could not take the situation in a cooler manner than he does. This satisfied the newspaper man that the Russian duelist is about to be surprised. He may have had plain sailing in past affairs of the kind, but when he ran across Mynheer Joe he certainly struck a snag, that now gives promise of wrecking his bark.

Mr. Grimes hails, and a voice answers—the voice of the French officer who met him as the baron's representative. They are to take the dahabeah nearer the shore. The others have just arrived, and if all their party can be counted, there is nothing to be done but to push off and get up sail.

“Captain, one question,” says Mr. Grimes.

“At your service,” replies the polite Gaul, whom they can just indistinctly see standing on the roof of the second cabin in a brave attitude, such as French officers delight to assume, although those of other nations are not far behind them in this respect.

“You spoke of a doctor—the *family* doctor of the baron, who understands his constitution and knows how to treat him. Pardon me, but is he on board with you?”

Silence follows this cool question, as though the Frenchman has been staggered by it; then, in his courteous way—he would be polite even if thrusting his sword through an enemy—the officer of the Khedive replies:



"He is with us, sir."

"Good. Then we consent to start," says Grimes, conscious that the baron's ears have caught all that has been uttered, and willing to let him know that there is no such thing as "scare" in their party.

No more is said.

Orders are given and the two Nile-river boats gotten under way with the rapidity that distinguishes the peculiar model common to this country. Mynheer Joe clasps the hand of his second and gives it a squeeze.

"Thanks, my good friend. That dig is worth something to me, you understand," he says in his quiet but earnest way.

"Of course, sir. You know, my interests are bound up in yours. I am determined that this story shall end in the proper way, and it can hardly do that if the baron spits you on his sword like a fowl before the fire. I have confidence in you, Mynheer Joe," replied Mr. Grimes.

No more is said just now, for the boat is being gotten under way. The breeze chances to be favorable, and there is more of it than usual at this time in the morning. It comes from a quarter not far removed from northeast, and the three-cornered sails of the dahabeah are peculiarly fitted to catch a quartering current of air.

Both boats are speedily rushing through the water at a lively rate. The situation is rather romantic, with the moon nearly overhead, day beginning to break in the east, and the great sails of the rival boats catching the fresh breeze that has



worked in across the intervening delta of the Nile, from the Mediterranean.

Was ever a duel fought under similar circumstances as those which promise to mark this one? Probably not.

The two boats seem to be about equal in point of speed, as they continue to keep the same relative distance apart. Perhaps, in a genuine race, with a wind like this, their craft could gain the advantage by "blanketing" the other and cutting off her supply of wind, but this will not pay under present conditions.

Although Joe has made the conditions of the duel, being the challenged party, he really leaves the selection of the ground to his rival, having only stipulated that it shall be among the hills that lie above Cairo.

Sandy and Mr. Grimes stand together near the bow of the little vessel, listening to the music of the water as her prow cuts through the tide of the Nile like a knife, curling the foamy suds on either side and hurling them back in rolls.

Both of them are duly impressed with all their romantic surroundings, and the war correspondent is jotting down ideas in his mind that will be called upon to supply space in some forthcoming article. At the same time it is evident he has something worrying him.

Mr. Grimes is quick to notice such things, as he has made a business of reading faces.

"What's wrong, Sandy?" he asks, abruptly, as he removes his cigar to flip the ashes from the end with his dexterous little finger.



"Who said so? How did you know? Hang it, Mr. Grimes, you read men as I would books. You may have buried yourself out in Colorado—you took good care to study human nature."

"Then you confess you are bothered, my boy?" continued the other, steadily.

"Well, yes, I've been wondering. You see we know this baron is a sly schemer?"

"Admitted."

"And not to be trusted out of sight."

"Ordinarily I should not dare to put my life in his charge. You're right, Sandy."

"Well, we've let him select the spot for the affair. How can we tell but what he may spring some shrewd game on us. Can you promise that yonder dahabeah has not half a dozen hired assassins on board, ready to annihilate us in case the baron feels the necessity?"

Mr. Grimes laughs, and there is a reassurance in his manner that speaks for itself.

"Sandy, give over worrying. I believe the strongest proof we can have that the baron means no treachery is his astounding confidence in himself. He has fought duels before and believes himself invincible. Hence it seems a picnic, a walk-over to him."

"Very true, very true, sir, but you must admit there is a chance that—"

"Always 'that,' my boy, but you also forget something of interest—*ourselves*! 'What are we here for?' as a member from the South asked in a republican convention? If Joe can take care of the



baron, surely we will be able to look after his friends be they two in number or a dozen."

"Well spoken, Mr. Grimes. My mind is already clear on that point. I believe we will come out of this thing with flying colors. My trouble has vanished even as the smoke of this cigar fades into space."

Sandy is himself again, and that means a cheery friend, a faithful comrade, one whom Mynheer Joe could not better were he to search the globe over.

As the daylight grows stronger the moon wanes in power; it is no longer a strife between the two as to which must win, for Luna is already out of the battle.

Cairo is left far behind upon the east bank and, looking back, they can see the first shafts of sunlight glinting from her numerous domes, although the mighty god of day has not yet shown his smiling face to those upon the river Nile.

It is a strange spectacle, and one that appeals to the artistic in their natures, but all of them are very familiar with the scene, so that the desert, the pyramids, the city of the four hundred mosques, its queer people and the storied Nile itself—all these things do not appear so strange to their eyes as would be the case were they newcomers to the land of Egypt.

Besides, their mission is of such a nature that their thoughts are bound to stray to it from time to time—when men are bent on an errand of a deadly character they are not expected to laugh and joke as if going to a wedding.

"Come back to the cabin, Sandy. I think we



would be wise to examine our firearms. Nothing like making sure that everything is in working order. These hyenas and jackals of the desert strike with amazing quickness when they do show up. Come!"

His words are significant, and his companion has no difficulty in understanding. Together they pass the sailors squatted about on the forward deck, after their usual manner when not at work. These fellows are Arabs, and not the best-looking chaps Mr. Grimes has set eyes on. He gives Sandy a nudge, but this wide-awake newspaper man has already noted the fact.

"Fine collection of buzzards, eh? Must say the captain has looked far and wide to find a game set. They'd fight too, I reckon," he whispers.

They find Mynheer Joe lying upon the roof of the cabin, a pillow under his head, which the captain of the boat has brought out, and, to all appearances, enjoying his cigar.

Together they enter the cabin. Upon the table is seen a quaint flagon and a glass. Mynheer Joe moves toward it, but he finds the hand of Mr. Grimes before him.

"Not allowed, my friend. Heaven knows what sort of drug there might be in this. If you must steady your nerves—" And he produces a small flask from one of his pockets. But Joe shakes his head.

"That isn't in my line, sir, though I thank you all the same. I've seldom found a time when my nerves needed strengthening by such artificial means, though I confess that my life was once saved



by a small amount of liquor. The fellow drank it who was left to execute me, and got into such a maudlin condition that I easily overpowered him and made my escape. Except as medicine I have no use for the stuff."

"Well, my nerves need a little tonic, and I know of no better. Sandy, how is it?"

And as the little war correspondent wipes his mouth with his handkerchief he murmurs:

"Prime, my lord."

A minute later, all of them are busily engaged in examining their revolvers, which are found to be in good condition.

"Take charge of mine, Mr. Grimes," remarks Joe, who, of course, cannot be thus burdened when about to enter upon an engagement that will require all his agility.

"With pleasure, sir, and should the occasion arise for using it, I trust you will find that I can make each shot count almost as well as yourself. By the way, Joe, you didn't forget to bring the rubber foot-holds I borrowed from the professor?"

"Never fear; I have them. The baron will not get his work in through a slip on my part, if I can help it," returns Joe, touching a pocket of his blouse, where a small package of some sort is hidden.

Presently they pass outside again, to find that the sun has arisen and a new day begun. They keep a short distance from the shore in order to catch the full benefit of the breeze, but every palm stands out in bold relief.

The scene is such as can be gazed upon any day



along the lower Nile, and yet one never tires of looking upon it. Numerous sails dot the broad river, some beating down, while many fly before the breeze. A string of camels forming a caravan can be noticed above the bank, doubtless bound for the far-off cities, between which and Cairo quite a trade is carried on in this way.

Here some travellers on donkeys can be seen, making an early start, for the pyramids. Now and then slaves are discovered at work with the poles and buckets known as a *shedoof*, and which primitive method of engineering in the way of lifting water from a lower to a higher level is still practiced in the land where they carry on agriculture just as their forefathers did two thousand years back.

An occasional windmill is seen where some house nestles on the bank, but this is generally the property of foreigners. Upon the river freight *cangias* are met with, heading to or from Cairo. Those boats which have the fair wind are supposed to keep out of the way of others, but the *reis* in command of their craft seems to be in something of a dare-devil spirit this morning. He swings the dahabeah in so close to one of the heavier craft that he comes within an ace of having the *sandal* trailing behind sunk.

The sun is now almost half an hour high. When will the boats come to land? Surely there is no need of travelling a great distance from old Cairo in order to discover a good dueling ground.

Perhaps the baron has a particular spot in view. He may even have been a principal in some affair of honor that has culminated in a meeting up the Nile,



and his success at that time inspires him to select the same rendezvous again.

Our friends show no impatience, whatever they may feel. Sandy, looking ahead, directs the attention of his comrades to a point.

"Like as not we're aiming for that. I can see rows of tombs in the rocks back of it. Such a place would make an admirable spot for the duello. Remember the old stories I've read of steamers on the Mississippi stopping to let a couple of passengers fight on some sand-bar, and the spectators burying one of 'em there. This puts me in mind of it. Where could you find a better place to dispose of the unfortunate victim than in one of those empty rock tombs? Capital idea! Jove! I'll improve on this subject when I write it up, see if I don't!"

Sandy gets no further, as he feels a grip on his arm, and, turning, sees Mr. Grimes making expressive grimaces intended to warn him that he is treading on dangerous ground. Mynheer Joe, however, does not seem at all affected, but treats the matter as a huge joke.

"I think for my part, I prefer being buried in a modern cemetery; and I authorize you, my friends, in case the worst comes, to see that my poor remains are taken care of. In my pocket will be found a letter addressed to you, Mr. Grimes, concerning the little matter we were speaking about last night. You can let the person most interested see it. There—I am done. I have made my peace; but I want both of you to understand that it is not Myheer Joe's intention to drop before the sword of the Russian. I hope to show him how an American



can uphold the honor of his flag, even at the sword's point."

Confident words these, but they express the feelings of the man. It is partly this assurance concerning his own powers that has brought Mynheer Joe safely through numerous deadly perils in the past.

Fear will never paralyze his arm when face to face with danger, nor can an antagonist expect to reap any benefit from such a source.

By this time they see that Sandy was not far out of the way when he marked this point as the scene of their expected debarkation. The leading *daha-beah* makes a graceful sweep and comes about at the point, landing at a rock that seems especially adapted for such business.

Now it is their turn; the old *reis* himself has charge of the tiller, and gives his orders in a loud, shrill voice that strikes the tympanum in a painful way, as though some boy is indulging in the agonizing delirium of beating upon empty pans. The Arab sailors can no longer be termed lazy; they jump around in the liveliest possible manner and carry out the commands of the captain.

Not an inch out of the way, they shade the wind out of the sails, and the boat brings up gently alongside the other, to which it is at once secured.

The baron and his party can already be seen upon the shore. Under his arm the Frenchman carries a long, slender package, without doubt the swords which are destined to occupy so prominent a place in the coming event. There is a third member of the party, the man known as Colonel Taylor, and



also a short individual who carries a surgeon's case in his hand.

When our friends join them, words are passed between. The principals bow in a perfunctory way, but Mynheer Joe smiles in a careless manner that must set the Russian duelist to thinking.

They do not need to go far away; the ground is right there among the rock tombs; but it is advisable to move on a little for several reasons. It is not their intention to have the sailors on board the boats witness the affair, and just beyond the rocks they are apt to find a spot where the sun will not throw his fierce rays into the eyes of either, causing a momentary blindness that may be fatal. So they walk along two and two, Mr. Grimes bringing up the rear.

In five minutes they come to a pause, and the French officer sweeps his arm around with a dramatic gesture, saying:

“Behold, gentlemen! The ground selected for the duello!”







## CHAPTER XIV.

### A LITTLE AFFAIR AMONG THE MOKKATAM HILLS.

No one can reasonably offer any objection to the selection of the ground, since it is level enough for all practical purposes, and certainly so isolated that there does not seem to be any danger of interruption. The association with the strange tombs hewn in solid rock ages ago, by the Egyptians, might make some men nervous, but it does not appear to have any such effect upon either of the two who have met here to face each other in a combat for honor.

Mr. Grimes, in company with the French officer, goes over the ground step by step and announces that he is perfectly satisfied with the location chosen. It certainly cannot be improved upon, and might not be equaled, so they are well content as it is.

“Now for the weapons,” says the American,



whose business-like methods cause the other to suspect he has figured in duels before.

The French officer has heard of desperate affrays happening in the South and the West. How is he to know that the participators in these scrimmages are, as a general thing, the very lowest scum of society, and that Southern gentlemen as a rule, have given up their former allegiance to the code as a settler for all difficulties?

Picking up the package he unrolls it. Within, wrapped in chamois skin, lie two handsomely made swords, of delicate but magnificent appearance. These he draws from their separate scabbards and holds toward the American.

"Select which one you please," he says, quietly.

Mr. Grimes crooks his finger, and when Joe, who is watching, sees this, he comes at once to the side of his friend.

"Try these blades," says his second, curtly.

The explorer takes one up and makes a few movements with it.

"Careful, the baron's looking at you," whispers his mentor just then, and Joe sweeps the air no more with the blade.

He bends it double over his knee, allowing it to fly back again. Then the second sword is also put through its paces. Mynheer Joe's face is a study, for he finds it a pleasure to handle such weapons as these.

"How does monsieur find them?" asks the Frenchman, eagerly.

"Superb—beyond comparison!" replies Joe.

"Which do you choose, monsieur?"



"That is a small matter. I find them equal. One has a stain upon it, you see."

"*Oui, monsieur*," bending forward to look at it more closely, and then turning to the baron, who smiles coldly, as he carelessly remarks:

"The blood of young Lord Carmorgan. We met in Turkey. He was buried in Stamboul, I believe. A careless second failed to wipe the blade, and it is such a good set that I hate to part with them."

These words have not the slightest effect upon the American, who holds the two swords, one in either hand, weighing them thus.

"Choose the one that is stained—*that* has stood the test, and may be lucky," whispers Sandy.

"Say rather accursed, my friend, since it is marked by the blood of a brave man. I'll take the same blade Lord Carmorgan handled. Since a Briton failed to teach the Russian bear a lesson with it, we'll see what Brother Jonathan can do. Hold it for me, Mr. Grimes."

No one makes any remark, though secretly the baron is fuming, while both Mr. Grimes and Sandy chuckle at the words of the traveller. It is patent that Mynheer Joe has gauged the make-up of his antagonist to a dot, and will be able to take care of him.

Both principals in the contemplated affair proceed to business. Coats and vests are removed. Joe arranges his attire just as in the gymnasium, placing the footholds over his shoes, tightening a belt around his waist, and fastening up both sleeves.

The baron observes his movements with a curiosity that shows itself upon his face. He discovers



that his American antagonist knows more than he gave him credit for, and perhaps for the first time the startling thought flashes through his brain that this man may be a revelation to him.

His practical eye takes in the wonderful wrist of Mynheer Joe and the superb forearm. These points give promise of astonishing supple sword-play if in the possession of a master.

The baron feels concern—something that never bothered him before when about to enter a little affair of this kind, for the duello has been a pastime to the Russian, feeling that he was a sure winner from the start.

Both are now ready.

Their seconds place them, and as there is really no advantage in the ground, this requires little effort.

“One moment before we begin!” It is Mr. Grimes who speaks, and all eyes are at once turned upon him. “Let us understand the conditions of this affair. Will the gentlemen’s honor be satisfied with the first blood, or is it to be a duel to the death?”

The baron opens his mouth to declare for the latter, remembering the disgrace put upon him when the wine was dashed into his face. Just then his eyes rest upon the countenance of the American. What is it in Mynheer Joe’s looks that causes a spasm to pass through the frame of the duelist? He hardly knows himself, save that for perhaps the first time in his life he has had an undeniable twinge of fear.

“The first disabling wound will satisfy me,” says the baron, coldly, secretly meaning that when he



himself gives this it shall be the *coup de grâce* through his foeman's heart.

Mynheer Joe inclines his head.

"What the Russian says suits me. I am ready for any conditions," he remarks.

"It is understood, gentlemen, a disabling wound brings the little affair to a termination, and we, the seconds, are to be the judges. Are you ready for business?" calls Mr. Grimes.

Both swordsmen assume favorite positions and make affirmative responses. Mr. Grimes nods his head to the Frenchman.

"Begin!" calls that worthy, sharply.

Hardly has the word left his lips than the sword-blades kiss with a ringing sound, and the extraordinary duel among the hills of Mokkatam has begun. It is the baron who assaults; he is eager to discover the mettle of his antagonist, and throws some fire into his attack, though not forgetting to keep his guard intact, and retain some reserve.

The spectators group around, and prepare to witness one of the most astonishing scenes that ever took place upon the bank of the historical Nile.

It does not take an experienced swordsman long to learn that he has met a foeman worthy of his steel, and ere they have been at it ten seconds the Russian allows a look of surprise to be seen upon his face.

This is succeeded by an expression of terrible ferocity. He has discovered the caliber of his antagonist, and is more than ever determined to kill him then and there. Fortunately, the object of this solicitude has something to say about this matter himself, and he speaks with no uncertain sound.



For perhaps a minute or so, the swords meet and writhe and twist like gleaming snakes. Then the agile baron springs back beyond reach. He has failed in his first attempt. What will he endeavor to accomplish now?

He knows better than to display any signs of alarm. On the contrary, he forces a sneer upon his lips and appears unconcerned.

Again he advances, to adopt an entirely new system of tactics, which the American meets as becomes the favorite pupil of Monsieur Duval, the famous sword-master of all Paris.

The baron is amazed to find that each of his little tricks is met in rapid order. He gains no advantage. If Joe were surrounded by a wall of steel he could not be more secure apparently from the onslaught of his antagonist.

On his part, the American admits that never has he met one who could wield the blade with such power and skill as this Russian duellist. He is kept busy repelling attacks, and when he finds an opportunity to make a lunge on his own account it is met and parried by the clever work of the baron.

Mr. Grimes looks on and smiles; he thinks he can afford to, knowing well what a surprise will yet come upon the Russian. As for the French captain, he rubs his hands together in great glee; such a spectacle as this appeals to everything that is martial in his composition. He forgets that two men are battling for life, and only sees the marvelous skill brought to bear in manipulating the swords. All the while fervid exclamations escape him, as if he cannot keep his feelings under control; he is like



a kettle of boiling water—when the heat reaches a certain stage he bubbles over.

“*Sacre!* Look at that lunge! Magneeficent! And the return? *Charmant!* It is worth losing a night’s sleep to gaze upon such lovely play. *Mon ami*, observe the blades kiss and twine about each other. My friend has met a noble adversary. *Mon Dieu!* Such coolness, such wonderful arms, I have not seen in all my life. I am proud to say Americans are the friends of the French. But it is one great pity—he must go down. The baron tires them all out—his arm is made of steel. I trust it will only be a flesh wound. *Parbleu!* I should hate to see that brave man die.”

Thus he mutters and exclaims in starts, as he watches the fierce engagement. Mr. Grimes hears him. Mr. Grimes does not share his apprehension one iota. He simply utters in the Frenchman’s ear, the one word:

“Wait!”

Meanwhile the second bout between the two men has proven as fruitless as the first. As if through mutual consent they spring back to recover themselves.

“Time!” says the Frenchman.

They rest upon their swords, and during this brief interval keen eyes are upon them. The French captain contrasts the two. He has declared that the baron, in the past, has won more than one victory because of his wonderful endurance, which has enabled him to wear his antagonist out. To his surprise, he now discovers that the Russian has put forth such tremendous force in the attempt to



beat down Joe's guard, that he shows more signs of exhaustion than his antagonist.

What does Mynheer Joe do, as if to show his contempt for the man against whom he is pitted, but take a cigar and place it, unlighted, between his teeth.

The baron's eyes flash lightnings when he sees this act. He realizes that the mistake of his life has come upon him. When Mynheer Joe entered Cairo the Russian's star began to decline. It is now going down with a rush.

"Ready!" he cries, raising his sword.

The American meets him half way, and for the third time the weapons clash together. Now the baron exhausts his repertory of curious strokes and tricks, hoping to discover some weak point about the other's defense.

In this he signally fails.

As yet he has felt no twinge of fear, trusting in his own skill to defend himself. If it comes to the worst, the duel can be called a draw, and he sucks consolation out of that fact, while not omitting to keep a close watch for the opening he still hopes to discover.

A new phase in the duel is about to take place, what Mr. Grimes has been so anxiously awaiting. He wonders why Mynheer Joe delays so long, and can only lay it to that strange feeling of fine humor which causes a cat to play with a mouse.

It comes at last.

Joe springs back a pace, passes his sword from his right hand to his left, and is at the Russian like a tiger. His trenchant blade flashes before the baron's



eyes, and a cry of wonder and dismay is forced from the latter's lips, when he realizes a new arm is matched against his wearied one; that the marvelous attack must now be met in a different manner than before, since it proceeds from the left shoulder.

Mr. Grimes hears a groan beside him. It is the French officer, who realizes that the day is lost to his cause.

The baron is game. He battles desperately to save himself. Mr. Grimes notes the sallow hue that has crept over the man's face, and he knows the duel is already decided. For the first time perhaps in his life, the Russian feels the cold clutch of fear at his heart. Once a man allows this feeling to come over him in a duel, his chances are gone. At the same time, over-confidence is just about as fatal to success. The only safe course is a line between, cautious and wide-awake, ready to do his best and leave the rest.

It becomes apparent that the baron weakens. His defense is no longer the marvelous one he put up while Mynheer Joe continued the right-hand movement. These flashes from the uncouth side dazzle him. He has never been drilled to meet the attack of a left-handed swordsman, and finds his brain unable to successfully cope with the new problems thus suddenly presented for solution.

The baron is lost.

He might still save himself by springing back and sullenly refusing to continue the engagement with a man who has such a wonderful advantage over him, in that his left arm is as dexterous as his right.

Perhaps such a thought flashes into the mind of



the Russian ; he is human, and life is sweet to him ; but he does not take advantage of the idea. Pride rises against it. He comes from a race that would meet death rather than appear a coward.

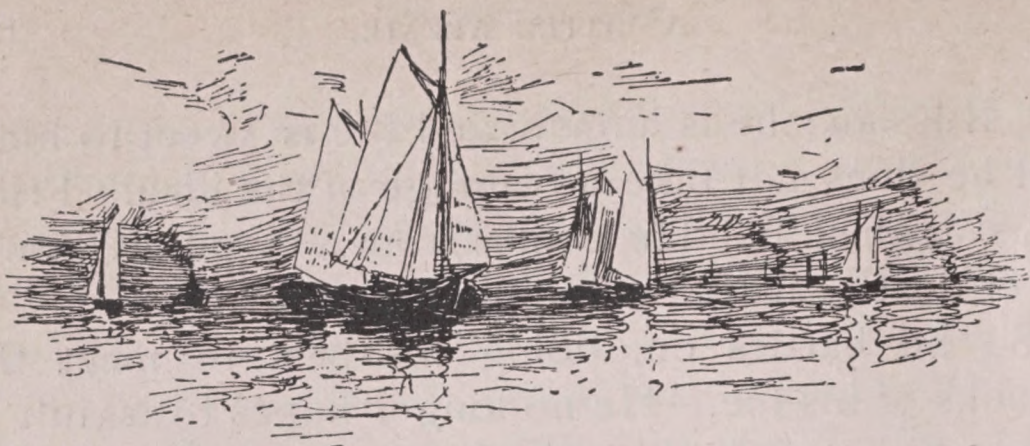
So he battles on, doing his best to meet the attacks of his foe. He no longer hopes to assault in turn—his arm is too tired for that. He suffers excruciating pain every time he makes a move. More than once can Mynheer Joe, if he chooses, drive his blade through the body of his foe. He lets the chances slip by ; perhaps the time may come when he will regret this mercy, but he does not like to have the blood of a white man on his hands.

At last the opportunity he looks for comes ; there is a quick movement, a sudden cry, and the sword of the American protrudes through the right arm of the baron at the shoulder.

Lord Carmorgan has been avenged with the weapon he handled in vain !







## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BARON IS SATISFIED.

With another quick movement the American withdraws his sword and steps back a pace to avoid any punishment, but the baron is in no condition to deal such. He sinks back, and only that the French captain springs forward and catches the baron in his arms he must fall in a heap.

There is no sign of fainting, only exhaustion. He stands there, sustained in part by his second, looking at the first man in all the world who has proved his master, and the gleam of those eyes can be termed nothing less than diabolical.

Mynheer Joe leans on his sword and coolly surveys his antagonist. Then he calls for a match and applies it to the cigar which he has held between his teeth all this while. It is evident that he has no fear of the future.

The tableau remains unbroken for perhaps a full minute.

"Time!" says Mr. Grimes, clearly.

Mynheer Joe, still smoking calmly, elevates his



sword. The plucky baron makes a move to follow suit, when his second, the French captain, throws himself between.

"*Mon Dieu!* You would not finish this affair with murder, comrades? It was agreed that a disabling wound would end it. See, my principal has no longer any arm. What served him so well is now almost as useless as a dead member. You will call it quits, or I shall offer myself his substitute!" he cries with commendable enthusiasm and pluck, since he knows he is no match for the Yankee.

"On one condition," returns Mr. Grimes, who also produces and lights a cigar, while the irrepressible Sandy is scribbling away for dear life in shorthand at the rate of a thousand words a minute, more or less.

"Name it, monsieur."

"The baron provoked this duel by an insulting allusion to the American flag. It has had a trial by arms, and the decision rests against him. Let him frankly apologize, not to my friend only, but to Americans everywhere, and I am sure Mynheer Joe will be satisfied as well as myself."

The proposition is reasonable.

"*Parbleu!* I see no reason why it should not be done in common justice, since it has been decreed that my principal was in the wrong. It was a grand sight though; a superb spectacle that will haunt me always. What say you, *monsieur le baron*—do you withdraw your allusion to the flag under which this gentleman serves?"

The Russian smiles.

"I am compelled to, since I declared that it cov-



ered only cowards, for he has proven very plainly that I made a mistake. Mynheer Joe knows my allusion was made only to provoke him to a meeting, so that I need retract my words no further than this."

"You have had the meeting; are you satisfied, baron?" asks Joe himself.

"For the present, yes," returns the other, between his teeth, "but this does not end it, my American friend. No man has ever yet run across my path and lived. Your time will come!"

"No man up to now has ever worsted you in a duel, Russia, but you met your match here. Take care it is not *your* life that is snuffed out like a candle. We Americans shoot to kill when we engage with wolves or tigers," says Mr. Grimes.

The baron does not answer, but if looks can do deadly execution, then would our three friends drop on the spot.

By this time the surgeon has taken the baron in charge, and leaving open his shirt, which is already saturated with blood, he proceeds to bind up the wound in a business-like way.

It will prove painful for some little time, but not dangerous, unless the baron's blood is in wretched condition, when blood-poisoning may set in. A wound of this sort is of a more serious nature in a hot country than if received where the air is bracing.

Mynheer Joe quietly resumes the garments he cast off when preparing for the duel, and in five minutes one would not imagine he has been engaged in any such business.



It is time they returned to the river. Sandy, in particular, is anxious to reach Cairo for some reason or other.

Just as they are about to bid the others a courteous good morning and withdraw from the scene, the silence that broods over the place is suddenly and rudely broken.

Shrill cries, filled with anger, ring out, coming from the direction of the river. It sounds as if a dozen men or tiger-cats are endeavoring to see which can make the most noise.

"They're coming!" exclaims Sandy, whipping out his revolver, and selecting a good-sized palm as a base of defense.

It flashes through the minds of all that the baron has made a threat when he declared the duel did not end the feud between himself and Mynheer Joe.

Then again, they remember their conversation in the cabin of the dahabeah, when the possibility was mentioned, of a conspiracy to overwhelm them in case the baron lost the fight.

When they hear those fearful shouts, it comes to the mind of Mynheer Joe as well as Mr. Grimes that the Arabic crews of the two boats have combined and are rushing upon the scene to down the enemies of the baron. Perhaps some prearranged signal has been given to let them know the result of the duel, and that it now rests with them.

Hence, acting under this belief, the two Americans instantly draw their weapons. They do not stand in their tracks but immediately leap forward to meet their expected foes.

Sandy, seeing the new state of affairs, quits his



beloved palm, and follows after them as rapidly as his shorter legs will allow.

To their surprise the enemy does not show up; their fierce clamor still continues, but it seems to be in the quarter where the boats have both been left. Mr. Grimes is the first to guess the truth.

"Bless my soul, I believe they've having a small war among themselves!" he says.

"Yes, we're not in it," gasps Sandy.

Another moment, and they turn an angle of the rocks that allows them a clear view of the battle-field. Sure enough, the rival crews of the two dahabeahs are at it, hammer and tongs. How the affair started may never be known, for these rascally Arabs cannot be hired to tell the truth when there is a chance to lie; nor do the Americans care materially about this point.

Mynheer Joe, without a moment's hesitation, bounds away, heading for the boats as though it is his intention to join in the *mélée*, where broken heads will soon be the order of the day.

"He'll be killed!" cries Sandy, hurrying along at the side of Mr. Grimes.

"Don't you believe it, my boy. Joe is used to quelling such disturbances among the blacks of the Soudan; and, my word for it, he'll bring this affair to a sudden close. Watch! There he goes now."

The explorer has leaped aboard the dahabeah nearer the shore. It is upon the deck of this all the Arabs are gathered in a noisy crowd, pulling one another's frowsy hair and threatening to make blood flow.

Mynheer Joe's voice is heard like a trumpet above



the clamor, which gradually dies down as different members of the mob quail before his eye and terrible appearance.

"Back to your boat, all who belong there! Back, or you shall die like dogs!" he shouts in the Arabic tongue, which, in his long service in the Soudan, he has fully mastered.

They hear his words, they see his threatening manner, and as the mobs of blacks obeyed the slightest wish of the magnetic hero Gordon, so a portion of his reflected light is placed, like Elijah's mantle, on the shoulders of the man who saw him die and avenged his fall.

First the old *reis* jumps across to his own deck, and he is speedily followed by one and another of his crew.

The will-power of a single man has ere now controlled thousands, and Mynheer Joe is possessed of this personal magnetism, that draws men to him, and even affects his enemies.

When Mr. Grimes and Sandy pull up at the rocky landing, peace has fallen upon the crews of the rival river boats. Though they glare at one another and make threatening gestures, they do not longer call out.

Some of the Arabs look rather the worse for their little tussle, and one in particular seems to be such a wreck that Sandy proceeds to draw his picture for the great book which he expects to issue some day, and which will illustrate all that a wide-awake war correspondent has seen during his travels in times of bellowing cannon and piping peace, the world over.

They cast off and are soon beating against the



contrary wind. As the current of the river favors their return to Cairo, they make fair progress, and the glittering city, with its mosques and minarets, its ancient buildings and modern quarters, seems to draw closer all the while.

Mr. Grimes seems thoughtful, while Sandy can hardly keep quiet, so exuberant are his spirits over the success of his friend.

When Mynheer Joe notices this, he does not hesitate to speak to the *pseudo* silver king.

"You don't look satisfied, Mr. Grimes?"

"That 's a fact," replied the other.

"Didn't the affair turn out to suit you!"

"Not exactly."

"Ah! You wouldn't have had the boot on the other leg, my friend?"

"Never! But that man should just now be lying there under the palms. They used to say out West, the only good Indian is a dead Indian; and I'm sure the only time the baron will be a gentleman in the true sense of the word, is when he is laid out."

"Well, we needn't worry; we leave Cairo before many hours, bound for India. Let the baron fume and the heathen rage; we 'll sail away over the seas and be happy."

Joe is thinking of Molly, for he already knows she and her father are to be members of the company on board the *Alhambra*, when the steamer leaves Alexandria for Port Said and the Suez Canal.

"Don't count on that, milord," remarks Sandy, looking up from his drawing.

"What d' ye mean, old fellow?" asks Joe, while



Mr. Grimes, who already knows, nods his head and looks very wise.

"The baron goes to India by the same steamer, the *Alhambra*."

Mynheer Joe frowns; he sees trouble ahead, knowing as much as he does of the man.

"That is too bad. It will spoil all our pleasure on the voyage. I am sure Miss Molly will regret to hear of it," he says.

"Like a death's head at a feast," from Sandy.

"If we could postpone our flitting until the next steamer," suggests Mr. Grimes.

Joe shakes his head.

"Impossible for me," he says soberly.

"I've got it?" exclaims Sandy, beginning a war-dance on the roof of the cabin, paper in one hand, pencil in the other. "Yes, I've got it!"

"What! The Nile fever?" demands Mr. Grimes.

"A subject for a dancing dervish," suggests Joe.

"Wrong, both of you, gentlemen. What I've got concerns us all. It's *an idea*!"

At this both Mr. Grimes and Joe make out to be dreadfully excited, appealing to Sandy not to let it get away and to be very careful lest his brain should burst.

"These sudden ideas are dangerous," declares Grimes, with great soberness.

"They may be for you, but my bread and butter depend on them you see," returns Sandy, not at all annoyed by their joke.

"Well, share it, old fellow."

"Don't you see we're anxious to hear all?"

But Sandy takes his time.



"It concerns you both, of course, but, most of all, it interests the baron."

"Ah, yes; of course, it does."

"The next steamer after the one we take arrives a week later at Alexandria. It is called the *Malwa*. What I propose is that the Russian bear shall miss the *Alhambra* and be compelled to lie over a week at Alexandria.

The others soberly take his hand and squeeze it to show their appreciation of his brilliant idea, which appears to strike them in a favorable light. At the present they do not stop for investigation.

"How will you do it, Sandy?" asks Joe, his eyes bent upon the wonder city ahead on the east bank of the Nile, the environs of which they have now reached.

"I haven't bothered myself about that yet, but this brain of mine can be depended on to bring out the proper thought when the times comes. Count upon it as a settled fact. The baron will remain in Alexandria when the steamer leaves; more than that I do not feel able to promise."

It is just as well he does not, since he may be unable to fulfill the conditions.

Their attention is now directed in another quarter, and the conversation wheels around to different subjects. Both of Joe's companions have had their respect for the explorer increased on this morning, first by the brave manner in which he went to meet a foe who, up to this time, has proven invincible, and in the second place by his dexterity in vanquishing that same individual. They have regarded him with respect before, but now their feelings are almost like



those of a brother. He is a wonder and a marvel to them.

Other boats sail upon the broad Nile, and the picture is one that the student of nature and peculiar customs never tires of admiring ; for what with the strange craft, their gaudily dressed passengers and the setting of old Cairo in the background, the scene is one that appeals to all that is romantic.

They see nothing of the rival dahabeah, but among the scores of similar boats in sight she may be nearer than they think. At any rate, the subject is one of indifference now.

A landing is made at the same spot where they embarked. Ere leaving they settled with the old *reis* for the use of the craft.

Different indeed are their feelings now ; when going aboard, the near future was dark and forbidding ; it was like a lottery from which they had just drawn a prize. Not one of the trio seems dissatisfied, save Mr. Grimes. That worthy shakes his head seriously a number of times and frowns, as though something weighs heavily on his mind. He can be heard to mutter, too, and the burden of his complaint is always in the same strain :

“A great mistake to only wound him. A scotched serpent is dangerous. We will hear from him again.”





## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ROAD TO INDIA.

Once more in Cairo they proceed to look after various duties that call for attention, Mr. Grimes going one way, Sandy to send his long-delayed telegram securing passage on the good steamer *Alhambra*, while Mynheer Joe goes at once to Shepherd's, where he has, later on, an appointment with several diplomatic representatives of the British government, who desire the fullest particulars he can give concerning the sad event that recently happened at Khartoom.

From a window of the hotel a pair of anxious eyes note his coming. A fluttering white kerchief attracts his attention, and he sees the face of Molly. She waves again and he bows. A tremendous load is taken off her mind. She has suffered keenly in the suspense that has weighed upon her ever since she heard the voices below in the court and learned from her father that Mynheer Joe had gone to fight a duel with the Russian baron.

Joe does not see her until evening, and then her look of eager interest tells him that she is acquainted with all. He flushes with a feeling akin to shame.



"You seem to have come out of your little difficulty with credit, Mynheer Joe," she murmurs, as she walks at his side.

"Who told you about it, Miss Molly?"

"I heard you leaving, and my father told me there was about to be some sort of an affair of honor, he called it."

"I am sorry you heard of it," he says.

"You have the glory of being the victor."

There is a slight sting of bitterness in her voice which he feels keenly.

"It is a glory I never sought. I have not paraded it about Cairo. Being the challenged party I was compelled to fight, or let that man, whom I despise, believe I feared him."

"And what was it all about?"

"He insulted my flag to my face. I am an American and resented the insult by tossing a glass of wine in his face. Then came the challenge. We had it out with swords under the palms, and I hope it is done with."

"But I have always heard the baron had no equal as a swordsman," she says quickly.

Mynheer Joe smiles.

"Still, good fortune attended me, and that sometimes makes up for lack of skill, you know," he replies; but Molly believes he has not told the whole story, and privately makes up her mind to question Sandy at the very earliest opportunity that offers.

"I have not seen the baron to-day"—looking him steadily in the eyes. "You did not kill him, I hope," with a shudder.



"Oh, no! Merely a puncture through the shoulder of his sword-arm that will keep him quiet for a few days, perhaps. Mr. Grimes—"

"Well, what about Mr. Grimes?" seeing that he hesitates to go on.

"He declared it would have been better for the whole of us if the baron had gone down in the duel; but I assure you I have no desire to see his blood on my hands. Let us talk of something more agreeable, Miss Molly."

"I understand he intends going to India on the same steamer with us."

"We will fervently hope and pray that something may occur to make him change his mind before we start," says the traveller, not thinking it good policy to say anything about Sandy's little scheme until they see whether it turns out to be a success or not.

So they drift upon other subjects, of which there are plenty to discuss. During the day, Mynheer Joe has met Molly's father and talked matters over, so that he knows much of their plans for the future and can shape his own accordingly.

It is their last night in the grand old city of Cairo. When darkness again descends over Egypt, they hope to be on the crack vessel of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's fleet, heading for Port Said and the Suez Canal.

Whether Joe is conscious of the fact or not, Molly soon discovers that her companion is the observed of all. Women and men look at him secretly or openly stare. The news of the duel has permeated society in Cairo; it is a secret no longer. Nearly every one is glad the affair turned out as it did, for



the baron has made few friends in Egypt. Besides, it is human nature to delight in seeing pride lowered; and ever since the Russian came to Cairo his reputation as a duelist has been noised abroad. The man who has downed him must naturally be a hero, outside of the fact of his connection with the fall of Khartoom.

Molly sees the admiring glances, and she is proud of Joe; the very fact that he seems unconscious of his exalted position raises him still higher in her estimation. As for that worthy, he thinks of nothing beyond the fact that he is in the company of the girl he loves, that her smiles raise him to the seventh heaven of exaltation, and that he would gladly bask in them forever.

It may be readily imagined that with the evil genius locked up in his room, groaning and cursing with the pain of his wound inflicted by a rival, the two young people pass a delightful evening, which neither of them will be liable to forget in time to come.

Mr. Grimes is present and keeps a watchful eye upon them, for he has a grave suspicion that further mischief will be hatched out by the ingenious mind of the baron and, under such circumstances, it behooves him to be constantly on guard in order to thwart any diabolical plans.

At last the great caravansary becomes quiet, and the square in front loses its brilliant, bustling appearance. The howls of stray curs alone break the stillness of the night, as they gather here and there to hunt in packs, often rending each other.

Morning again!



It is the day when the *Alhambra* is due at Alexandria, and the train leaves Cairo for the city at the mouth of the Nile at eight. What is an early breakfast for sojourners in Egypt is dispatched, and then the travellers are taken to the train that is in waiting.

As yet they have seen nothing of the baron. Mynheer Joe wonders if the Russian's absence is in any measure due to the machinations of Sandy. He endeavors to read the face of the little war correspondent, but it is no go. The great Napoleon could not have presented a more unruffled countenance. Sandy looks as innocent as a babe.

It lacks but five minutes to eight when a carriage drives up. The baron alights from it. All notice that his right arm is in a sling, but his face has a smile upon it as he bows.

He does not go alone. Colonel Taylor and the Hindoo servant are in his company, and look after the portmanteau and various packages.

Mynheer Joe realizes that Sandy has not yet had a chance, in all probability, to put his little game into operation. Perhaps he does not desire to do so until the last hour. He wonders what sort of a scheme it may be, and how the little correspondent will manage to manipulate the wires.

Then, as the baron and his companions enter a compartment, Joe loses them, and they drop from his mind at the same time.

Our five friends occupy one carriage, and have quite an enjoyable time during the seven hours it takes them to make the hundred and thirty miles between Cairo and Alexandria.



Lunch has thoughtfully been provided, and is enjoyed *en route*. Mynheer Joe sees more to admire in Molly Tanner with every hour of his acquaintance, and if the thought had not come to him before, he is now fully resolved to win her for his wife.

Why not, when fate seems to have made them for each other? He has saved her life; they meet again in a peculiar fashion and are mutually attracted; she is the one who would benefit by his uncle's will in case he never turns up—all these things can mean but one result. She must be his.

He revels in the thought that the worthy old *pater* may return to his beloved Chicago while the young people, filled with the desire to see more of the world, visit the strange places of earth, to add to the geographical knowledge of humanity. With such a companion, it will be happiness to isolate oneself for months, if need be, in the wilderness. He only longs for the chance to try it.

Mynheer Joe is no fool, if he has spent much of his later life away from society. He does not wish to be too abrupt. It is just as well that they get to know each other better before he attempts to assume the position of lover.

The journey becomes a trifle wearisome with such slow time, and all are really glad when Alexandria is reached, about three in the afternoon.

No steamer yet. She must be delayed.

The tourists are taken to the Hotel de l' Europe, on the grand square. If the steamer arrives, they will have to make a speedy transfer, as she will not remain more than an hour or so.

Sandy becomes all business.



He asks none of them to join in his secrets, but disappears from view. Perhaps he means to get the first information concerning the coming of the steamer and has his own way of doing it.

At exactly five minutes to four he makes his appearance at the hotel.

"Steamer is in sight!" he says to Mr. Grimes.

"How do you know, Sandy?" asked that worthy.

"I had a good glass and the pasha's palace afforded me a fine situation for observation. She will be in at five and leave at six. See that you are ready."

"Look here: How about that little engagement you made to keep—"

"Silence, my dear fellow! Say nothing, but keep your eyes open." And Sandy marches to find the others and communicate his news.

Mr. Grimes looks after him and smiles.

"I really suspect the sharp little fellow has been up to something or other. He has good friends here in Alexandria among the officers, who would do a good deal for him. I wonder what his game is, and if he will succeed in giving the baron his second knock-out. Perhaps it will be my turn to have a hand in the game after awhile."

Sandy cannot hope to keep the news of the approaching steamer from all others, nor does he desire to do so. All that he wants is to get his friends in readiness, so there may be no delay on their part.

He is off again as though very important business demands his attention; nor do the others see him until it is time to leave.



Amid the bustle of departure from the hotel Sandy again shows up and secures his baggage. They are soon landed at the quay. The steamer lies some little distance out, and shows signals that demand haste on the part of those coming aboard.

Then begins a din that is only equaled by the shouts of the donkey-drivers in the public square. The boatmen of Alexandria can give even a New York hackman points about bulldozing a traveller into accepting their particular craft. The clamor is intense, and, at times it actually looks as though some of the rascals might lay violent hands upon the travellers and attempt to toss them into their boats—a proceeding that would result disastrously to the boatmen.

At length, however, they hire a couple of boats to take themselves and luggage out to the steamer; and when this point has been actually settled, the mob quiets down like a hive of bees after an eruption or else seeks fresh victims.

Mynheer Joe notices that another party is embarking near by—the baron. He has secured a boat, and, with his two followers, heads for the steamer. Then Sandy's plan has been a dead failure! Mr. Grimes turns a look that borders on the sarcastic upon the correspondent, and is immediately knocked all in a heap by the twinkle he sees in Sandy's eyes. It seems to say to him: "Wait, and you may yet see some fun, my fine fellow."

Surprised, Mr. Grimes notices that Sandy keeps one eye turned in the direction of the boat in which the baron is seated, as though he finds deep interest there. He, too, turns his eyes in that direction.



At first he sees nothing out of the way. The man rows along after the indolent fashion of these lazy Alexandria boatmen, paying no attention to the signals from the steamer that indicate a lack of time.

Looking beyond, Mr. Grimes pricks up his ears, so to speak ; for a glimmer of the truth flashes into his brain when he sees a boat propelled by a couple of British soldiers and containing three others, one of them an officer, following the baron's craft and not far behind.

They come up rapidly.

The Russian turns in his seat in the stern and takes one look at the other boat, but does not seem to bother his head over it a bit. In the course of two minutes, the boat containing the soldiers is alongside the other, and the officer lays his hand on the gunwale.

"What does this mean?" demands the baron, in a loud, offensive voice.

Our friends motion to the men to stop rowing, so that they may hear what passes near by.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I am looking for Baron Popoff," says the officer.

"That is my name, sir," replies the other.

He does not look alarmed, only annoyed, as though some impecunious creditor is about to make a descent upon him at the last moment.

"I have just found you in time, baron," with a significant glance toward the waiting steamer, from whose funnel the smoke pours—she resembles some impatient animal eager to start in the race.

"Indeed, sir, what do you wish with me? I have



not kept my light hidden under a bushel while in Alexandria," returns the Russian.

"Pardon me, baron, I know nothing of the matter beyond the fact that I have instructions to bring you before the general."

"What?" and with a weird Russian curse bubbling from his lips, the baron springs to his feet.

"My language was plain, baron. I am sorry to break into any of your plans, but my orders allow no latitude."

"But, sir," thunders the baron, excited, "I am booked to leave on that steamer!"

"I am sorry for that, baron."

"You will not stop me now. Whatever this may be, it could easily be explained, but if I return with you to the citadel I lose the steamer!"

The officer looks his regret, but he is as firm as adamant.

"I only know my orders, baron," he says.

"You will not allow me to proceed, sir?"

"I am an English officer; I have been sent to find and convey you before the general. There my duty ceases. Not if there were a dozen steamers to sail and a thousand barons to take passage on them, would I fail to obey the orders I have received."

The baron grinds his teeth in rage.

"What if I refuse to accompany you?" he says, in a quiet tone that contrasts strangely with his excited manner.

"Much to my regret I shall be obliged to use force," replies the officer.

"Suppose I should still resist?"

"I would take you, baron, if I had to call upon



yonder iron-clads for help," pointing to the great British war-vessels *Vesuvius* and *Thunderer*, which lie about where the fleet opened the awful bombardment on Alexandria some half a dozen years before.

The baron seems to be weighing the chances. He hates everything English, and is peculiarly fitted for the mission to India in the interests of the White Czar. It grates upon his nerves to be thus ignominiously brought back by a British officer and compelled to give up his contemplated embarkation; but he can see no other possible outlet. The gates seem closed around him.

He looks like a baffled tiger, with its prey in full sight at the time the trap closes. Even Molly sees his face, and never forgets the look there is stamped upon it. Men glare at a fellow-human that way just before they do murder.

"There is no way out of this mess, then?"

"Only one—by accompanying me to headquarters, where you may explain matters and be back before the steamer leaves," replies the Briton.

"You know that is a false hope, sir. The *Alhambra* will steam away in ten minutes or so," replies the Russian, savagely.

"Well, as a *dernier ressort*, try Suez."

"Eh?"

"Take the railroad to Suez and there await the coming of the steamer down the canal."

"Confusion!" It is Sandy who mutters this, as he smites his head with his hand. "Great brain that of yours, old fellow, never once to think of that. Grimes, kick me, will you?"

"Wait. Danger of upsetting the boat, and I



reckon there are sharks here. When we get on board the steamer, I'll accommodate you with the greatest pleasure in the world," returns the practical Grimes.

"You try it when there are others around, and the worm will turn, sir, turn and rend you; but I am in the dumps. Think of the grand scheme I've arranged to shake that fellow, and never once thought of what that dandy officer just now so coldly informed him—that he could, even if delayed a couple of days, take the train, run to Cairo, and from there to Suez, waylaying us there. Hang the luck! I see I'll have to murder him in cold blood yet."

"That was a convincing argument, and he gives in. See how sullenly he resumes his seat and orders his boatman to pull for the shore. There! He looks this way. I wonder if he suspects. Keep a straight face, Sandy, for Heaven's sake. Mynheer Joe, forward once more."

The traveller gives a short, sharp order in the Arabic tongue; oars again fall into the water, brawny arms exercise their muscle, and the boats shoot toward the steamer.

The last they see of the baron and his followers, he is landing and moving away with the officer, to whom he talks with many a gesture, while Colonel Taylor and the Hindoo watch the luggage.

Our friends board the steamer. Some little delay is brought about, during which Sandy becomes nervous, walking the deck with a quick stride, watching the quay and pulling at his diminutive mustache.



Then comes the whistle, they move away, and Alexandria is left behind.

“Look!” says Sandy to Mr. Grimes, nodding in their wake. “The baron has returned—he is in his boat—the men row madly, but no one on board notices! Ta, ta, old fellow! Wait here for the *Malwa*, or meet us at Suez. Adieu! Adieu!”

The steamer increases her speed, and the city of Alexandria is soon lost to sight in the gathering dusk, although her many lights remain in view for some time. Gradually these fade away, and night reigns over the great sea whose waves wash the shores of three continents, and on board the *Alhambra* all seems well.







### BOOK III.

## A MEETING IN BOMBAY.

---

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### TROUBLE ON THE BHENDY BAZAR ROAD.

Some two weeks or so later, the steamer lies safe in the harbor of Bombay. They have experienced some rough weather *en route*, and all are glad to be safe on shore once more. The voyage has been otherwise uneventful, although when at Suez the baron and his two followers came on board.

Whatever suspicions the Russian may entertain, he has no positive knowledge of the truth. Sandy sees him looking hard in his direction quite often, but appears to be supremely indifferent to the fact. A child or a heathen Chinese could not look more innocent than Sandy when he chooses to.

As for Mynheer Joe, he makes up his mind to pay no attention to the other. It is easy to say this but more difficult to carry out the idea.



When a man is conscious of the fact that there is an enemy on board a vessel with him, watching his love-making with eyes that dart out deadly lightnings, it is not reasonable to suppose that he can forget all about him so easily.

Besides, Mr. Grimes warns Joe to be careful lest the baron attempt some such trick as was tried the first night at Shepherd's. Consequently Joe keeps his enemy well in mind and avoids hanging over the rail after dark, since it would not be a very difficult thing to be dropped into the Indian Ocean, where sharks of a prodigious size abound.

Nor is his caution in vain, for they lose one of their passengers one night. It is never known how he goes, but a sailor is found who believes he heard a muffled cry and a splash, but for fear of being laughed at, said nothing.

Mynheer Joe will never forget the look of surprise and disgust that flashes over the face of the baron when he comes upon him the next morning. After the absence of the passenger is noted, he begins to suspect the truth that perhaps the Hindoo servant of the baron, mistaking the other for him, pushed him overboard, and then reporting the accident to his master, made sure Joe was a gone case. The fact that the missing passenger resembles Mynheer Joe very much, causes the latter to feel more and more that there may be truth in the story. Even Sandy jumps at this theory, and from that hour Joe's caution increases, since he has no desire to make food for the sharks.

One happy event has occurred.

At Suez there comes aboard a Hindoo. Meeting



Sandy he makes inquiries, and the correspondent gladly leads him to Mynheer Joe. When that worthy sights him he gives a cry of delight, for it is Kasee whom he seizes by the hand, the faithful Kasee whom he lost upon the Nile, and who accompanied him from Khartoom.

It seems that the servant lost his master in the darkness, and feared he was drowned. He himself passed through a variety of adventures and finally reached Cairo only to find that his beloved master had sailed a day before.

Here some friends among the officers who knew his history made up a purse and sent Kasee to Suez to intercept the steamer, so that good and evil came aboard the *Alhambra* at her stop there.

As Mynheer Joe has really given the other up for dead, his delight is all the deeper on that account. Kasee acts as his guardian angel during the remainder of the trip, and the explorer feels safer on account of his coming.

Another thing occurs during the voyage. Molly makes a discovery. It is entirely an accident and puts Joe to no end of confusion; but he finds himself in for it, and makes the best of a dilemma.

This event is nothing more or less than a complete explosion of his secret, which is shattered one bright morning. All of them are seated upon deck, when the conversation turns upon the odd pipes of nations, and Molly, who is making a collection of these things, declares that she has never yet run across a Persian *kalian*, or water pipe; whereupon Joe, without reflection, declares that he has one in



his luggage to which she is welcome, beckons the ever-hovering Kasseer and gives him an order.

When the Hindoo, a few minutes later, lays in the hand of the fair American girl the object mentioned, she returns her thanks in no stinted tones, for the smoking apparatus is a beauty, jeweled and fit for the use of a king.

They are talking of the Persians, and Joe is narrating some queer scenes he has witnessed in that country, when an exclamation breaks upon their hearing. It comes from Molly, and, as they turn toward her, they find her gazing with distended eyes at the article she holds.

Mynheer Joe suddenly realizes the truth. A tide of crimson flushes his face, and he hastily moves away from the party, going to the side of the vessel.

"What is it?" asks Demosthenes Tanner, who sees that something unusual has occurred.

"Listen!"

Then Molly, still holding the odd water pipe, set with precious stones, reads:

"'A present from the Shah of Persia to his friend, Joseph Miner Carrington. 1884.'"

Demosthenes is not blind or dumb. He can see a pretty good-sized rat now.

"What! Mynheer Joe the very party we have been scouring the earth after? Bless my soul, now, this is an odd occurrence! I can hardly believe my senses. Are you sure, child?"

"Read for yourself, governor. And if that isn't enough, what do you think of his actions? It is



quite evident he forgot there was an inscription on this pipe."

With that, the young lady leaves her chair, and in another moment gains the side of the traveller, who leans over the rail looking at the flashing green water; her hand falls lightly on his arm and sends a mighty thrill, like a shock of electricity, to his heart.

"Give an account of yourself, Mynheer Joe," she says, gravely; and turning, he looks into her clear eyes, smiles and finally laughs.

"Really, I do owe you an explanation, Miss Molly. Since the cat is out of the bag now, I am willing to confess all."

So he tells her what is necessary, and Molly drinks it all in with eagerness. It sets her heart to beating wildly at the thought that this hero, the man who has saved her life and been with the devoted Gordon at Khartoom, should of all persons prove to be the Joseph Carringford whom she seeks, the missing heir, whose inheritance will fall to her in case he fails to materialize within a limited time.

It is both singular and romantic, and how can she help weaving delightful theories and plans out of the woof thus begun.

After that, her manner toward Joe changes.

He marks it himself, and at first marvels at the fact, for although a campaigner who has seen much of the world, Mynheer Joe is really a novice in all that pertains to love.

Molly has taken upon herself a new reserve. She treats him, not rudely, but with the manner of a lady on her dignity. The poor fellow is on nettles, so to



speaking. Has he done anything to offend this girl, for whose love he stands ready to peril his life if need be?

It is only the day before they reach Bombay that he gains an inkling of the truth. It comes from Mr. Grimes, who has been keeping his eyes open all this while, and is able to gauge the state of affairs.

To him Joe goes for advice; he has learned to respect the other greatly, and this matter is of so much importance to him that he can afford to take no risks.

Consolation is given to him. When, through various questions, he learns all that has happened, Mr. Grimes smiles serenely.

"Easy as falling off a log, my boy. Don't believe Miss Molly cares the less for you since learning your identity. The truth is she thinks even more of Joe Carrington than she did of Mynheer Joe, and the consciousness of that fact has alarmed her. I know the symptoms well, my boy. She fears lest she may show her love—that it may look as though she were trying to win the heir. Depend upon it, my dear fellow, all you have to do is to boldly storm the citadel, and the prize is yours."

This kind of talk cheers Joe up. He gulps down the lump in his throat and looks relieved.

"I really feared I had lost her through some blunder on my part," he admits, shaking the hand of his good friend and adviser.

"Nonsense! You were never so near victory in your life. The trouble is your battles have never been fought upon the field of love, and you don't understand the signs of distress. I'm an older man



than you, Joe ; take my advice, strike at the first favorable opportunity, and the blessings of Heaven attend you and yours."

Thus matters stand when the *Alhambra* comes to anchor before the great and wonderful city of Bombay, with its three-quarters of a million inhabitants—Europeans, Hindoos, Mohammedans, Parsees, Christians, Buddhists, Jews, etc.—one of the most delightfully interesting cities upon the face of the earth.

As soon as it is possible, the whole party, with their luggage, are transferred to the shore, where vehicles are secured to take them to a hotel.

These native *shigrams*, or, as they are generally called, *palkee gharries*, are peculiarly built affairs. They look like an oblong, black box with four wheels ; a sliding door is on either side, and there are also windows. Two seats face each other, and the whole equipage is drawn by a couple of sturdy bulls of the species used in India for nearly every purpose, decked in showy blankets, with a driver to walk alongside and urge them on.

Mynheer Joe knows where to go. He has been in Bombay before, and the rest may now profit by his experience.

A small hotel is to be found among the bungalows of the rich foreigners and Parsee bankers upon Malabar Hill, a suburb of a charming character, where the grounds of nearly every house are so filled with cypress, and banyan-trees, cocoanut-palms and tropical vegetation, such as plantains, guavas, custard-apples and the like, that the building can rarely be seen over the wall. There is



also a cool fountain splashing in every yard, which adds to the beauty of the scene.

At the hotel they managed to find accommodations, and Mynheer Joe even hires what little space there is to spare. The wisdom of this is made apparent when, later, a *palkee gharry* arrives, bearing the baron and his companions, who are compelled to go back into the city and seek accommodations at one of the leading hotels, near the Esplanade, where the government buildings are to be found.

Molly's first act is to secure a lady's-maid, for in this enervating climate one does as little as possible, and an *ayah* is almost indispensable to the comfort of my lady, fanning her, dressing her hair and doing worlds of small things.

The gentlemen, of course, fall in with the customs of the country at once, and soon appear dressed in white, with shakos upon their heads.

Mynheer Joe presently makes his way to the barracks, known as cantonment in this tropical country. He has business with an officer whom he hopes to find in Bombay. Disappointment awaits him, since the party in question is at present away. His return from Benares is daily expected—Benares, the sacred city, where one of the yearly *melas*, or religious fairs, that draw thousands of pilgrims anxious to wash in the waters and be made well, is in progress. So Joe can only await his coming. Meanwhile, there is no reason why he should not be enjoying the passage of time.

When he contemplates the pleasure with which he will show Molly over this peculiar city of the Hindoos, gazing upon its many strange sights, he



finds no reason to feel down-hearted over the matter.

He knows it all like a book, from the Towers of Silence on the hill, where the Parsees bring their dead for the vultures to prey upon, to the horse-markets, where sit, cross-legged, Persians wearing their blue or green cotton *kufians*, belted at the waist, and smoking their *kalias*, together with more active Arabians, with their striped mantles and silk *kafeeyas*, or tasselled handkerchiefs, twisted about their heads, all having horses for sale, that have been brought by sea from the land of Mocha.

The mysteries of the native quarter are well known to this man who has travelled, and he is almost as much at home among the shops and bazars of the famous Bhendy Bazar Road as on Broadway, New York.

Thus, the party can in a measure be free from the tyranny of the *chowkidar*, or guide, although they secure several of these illustrious personages to be useful. They are ready to do almost anything, even to waiting on the table or pulling the cord of the great *punka* fan that keeps the air cool at meal-times.

As in almost every part of the globe, the travellers find money an important factor to bring comfort, and the mighty rupee in Bombay will go far toward making one's stay a round of pleasure.

The weather is delightful, and it looks as if our travellers from the Nile may have a very pleasant stay in Bombay. Sometimes coming events do not cast a shadow before. The cyclone may burst upon a community with startling rapidity. Perhaps these good folks who have malice in their hearts toward



none may yet be surprised by the sudden and awful coming of a storm. As the dreaded monsoon sweeps across the Indian Ocean at certain times, bringing ruin in its path, so the hatred of one man may leave a trail of desolation behind, especially when that man is as unscrupulous as the Russian baron who comes to India in the interest of his czar, whose covetous eyes have long yearned to possess the rich country of the Indus and the Ganges.

One there is among them who sleeps with part of his senses on the alert—the man whose business has been such that he trusts not to seeming peaceful surroundings—Obed Grimes will hardly be caught napping when the blow finally falls.

Sandy is alive to his opportunity, and endeavors to see as much in a limited time as he possibly can. He takes copious notes in shorthand as he goes, which later on will be written out in the shape of spicy letters to the wide-awake New York journal by whom he is employed.

In company with Demosthenes Tanner and a *chowkidar* or two, he proceeds to take in as much of Bombay as can be done during a single afternoon.

They visit the Towers of Silence, enter magnificent bazars, watch the worshipers in the mosques, where the venerable *moulajee* chants in a harsh voice or reads the Koran, while the devout Mussulmans bow in the direction of the setting sun, for Mecca lies thither, far away over the Persian Gulf. They see life upon the great Bhendy Bazar Road, where porters carry loads, stately elephants are occasionally met, bullocks draw native vehicles; where stride the rich Brahmin, the poor *gwalla*, or cow-herder, the



lordly *rajah* and his attendants, and the lower grades of Hindoo people, of different castes, each picking his or her way along without touching others, which faculty makes a crowd in India more endurable than in any other place on earth.

All these things and others they see. The eyes never tire of watching the human kaliedoscope that moves and changes before him. In no other city on earth can this peculiar spectacle be met with in so intense a form as Bombay. Mingling with the colored robes of the natives, the white or red coats of the British soldiers remind one of a stupendous fact—that India, containing about a quarter of the population of the globe, is in reality ruled by some thirty thousand British soldiers. Truly the Hindoos are a peace-loving people. No warlike nation would thus tamely bear the yoke of the conqueror.

While Sandy and the Honorable Demosthenes Tanner are thus taking in the sights, Mr. Grimes nurses a lame ankle at the hotel. This leaves Mynheer Joe to show Molly about.

They have a very enjoyable afternoon, though it is just possible they are as much wrapped up in each other as interested in the singular sights upon which they gaze. This is only the same old story, with variations, that has been told since the days of our first parents, and which will never be antiquated. Love's young dream! What an ecstasy it carries. No time in future life can compare with it.

It is near the close of the day, when they are thinking of returning to the hotel that they arrive in front of a large mosque. Many persons are passing in



and out, for worship is carried on at all hours among the Mohammedans.

"Let us look in," says Joe. "I think it will repay you for the trouble."

He pays no attention to a frowning Hindoo near the door, but soon sees that they will not allow his companion to pass. This mosque is just as sacred as the highest at Mecca. The followers of Mohammed believe so little in women having a soul like themselves that they deprive them of many privileges. They are deemed servants, slaves, or, if particularly beautiful, fit subjects for a harem.

Thus foiled, Mynheer Joe and his fair charge turn away, laughing. They do not seem to feel very badly over the matter. True, the young woman's curiosity is piqued, but there are so many things to be seen in the quaint city that it need not worry one if a single door is shut in one's face.

It is just at this moment that they become aware of something out of the ordinary in the air. Molly shivers.

"Are we going to have a storm? I feel so very queer!" she remarks; while Joe looks upward in a thoughtful manner.

"Now that you mention it, I myself am conscious of a strange sensation. Perhaps it comes from being on firm land after two weeks and more on shipboard; or it may be that crowd yonder has something to do with it."

His words draw her attention down the Bhendy Bazar Road. Sure enough, a crowd does seem to be advancing. Something in the way of excitement



reigns in that quarter, and Joe, always on the alert, strains his eyes to make out what it is all about.

“Listen!” cries Molly.

She stands there like a statue, with her head poised, just as the beautiful deer might hearken in suspense when the distant blast of the huntsman’s horn echoes through the forest.

The breeze is light, but it chances to come from a favorable quarter, where the people are seen; and now they can catch voices raised in deep anger, bellowing forth angry words.

“Listen! Oh, Mr. Joe, it’s the governor!” cries the alarmed girl at his side.

Sure enough, Mynheer Joe has occasion to jump to that conclusion himself, for that roar as of a bull cannot possibly come from any one else. He looks closer, and discovers that two figures fly in front of the crowd, one tall and immense in stature, the other rather diminutive—in short, the fugitives can be no other than Mr. Tanner and Sandy.

What sort of a mess have they gotten into now? The pursuers seem determined to wreak vengeance upon them, and it looks serious, for when once excited these Mohammedans and disciples of Vishnu are hard to control; an insult to saint or god is very apt to be followed by speedy vengeance upon the head of the thoughtless offender, for these Mussulmans and idolaters are more touchy about their religion than true believers.

“Come,” mutters Joe, uneasily, “this looks like a serious business. If they overtake them I’m afraid murder will follow. Too bad! What have they been doing? Is this any work of that rascally Rus-



sian? Never mind crying over spilt milk. The only thing to be done is to save them—but how!”

That is the rub—how?

Mynheer Joe has to think quickly, for the crowd surges nearer with every minute. He has an idea which promises at least some hopes for success.

If he can delay matters—keep the enemies from coming into personal contact for a little while—all may be well.

“Molly!” he says quickly.

“Yes, Joe,” she replies.

In times like these etiquette is forgotten.

“It is your father’s life that is in peril. I will be able to hold them in check for a time. Will you dare something for his sake?”

“Yes, yes! Only tell me!” she gasps.

“Run as fast as you can to yonder corner; then down the street to the left until you come to the cantonment. Tell Colonel O’Brien it is Mynheer Joe who is in danger. He will send troops on the double-quick.”

She turns and flits from the spot like a gleam of light. Mynheer Joe has his attention at once occupied by the rush. Panting and holding each a revolver in his hand, Sandy and the Western orator rush up. Then Mynheer Joe stands out between them and the mob of angry Hindoos. He raises his hand, and, with the gesture of one born to command thunders out in their tongue the word:

“Stop!”





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### STREET LIFE AMONG THE HINDOOS.

The natives are very much wrought up by something that has occurred. It does not take a great deal to excite a crowd of Hindoos, especially if they are engaged in worship. Any indignity to their god or the mosque wherein every object is sacred to them, whether the insult is real or fancied, will bring them around like a swarm of bees, eager for the blood of the transgressor.

Mynheer Joe knows this full well, and judging from the excitable condition of the crowd, fears that his friends have been unwise in doing something.

The Hindoos cease to advance. This word, spoken in their native tongue, tells them that the other is a master. His personality is great. He checks their desire to reach out their hands and clutch their intended victims.

Eager dark faces, shining out from under varicol-



ored turbans, greet the view, some bearded, others smooth. Two dozen pairs of black eyes are focused intently upon one point, and this the countenance of Mynheer Joe. He holds them as if by some magic. They are swayed in a measure by his mind. It is the power of one will over others.

"What does this mean?" he asks.

A dozen voices endeavor to answer him. The babel is such that he cannot understand. He waves his hand with authority.

"Stop!"

Then he selects one who seems to be more intelligent than his fellows, as his face is crowned by gray hair and beard.

"Let this man tell me all," he says.

They push him forward as spokesman, a position he is eminently fitted to fill.

"It is plain. It is simple. We were worshiping in our temple before Vishnu. No man dares enter there with his shoes on. Suddenly we hear a terrible noise, and these two foreign devils jump in through the window. That is a deadly insult to our god. We burn to avenge it. We chase the Ingleses here. We demand satisfaction. Vishnu will have revenge. Their blood must wipe out the insult. That is all."

Murmurs of applause arise as the old Hindoo finishes his little speech. Mynheer Joe sees that it is as he feared. These people must be handled with gloves in all that pertains to their religion.

"Now hear *me*. You are fair and just. It is only right both sides should explain. Your god has been insulted. I believe it was an accident on the part of my friends, for they do not go around insulting



honest worshipers. I shall hear their story and repeat it to you. Then we will see if this trouble may not be averted."

His manner pleases them, for they feel he is an honest man. So Mynheer Joe turns to his friends and begs Sandy to explain, which that worthy does in an excited manner, accompanying his words with gestures.

The traveller smiles, for he sees the situation is not so bad as he feared. He speaks to Demosthenes Tanner, who eagerly agrees to his proposition. Then once more the friend of Gordon faces the eager, attentive crowd, and proceeds to get his friends out of this scrape into which their lack of due caution has thrown them.

"Listen!" he says, sharply, and the muttering in the air ceases as if by magic. "It is, as I believed, an accident. My friends had no desire to disturb you in your worship, or to insult your great god Vishnu. With reverence they were looking in through a window, standing upon a platform, when one end of it gave way and precipitated them through the opening. They could not explain matters because they are unable to talk in your tongue, so the best they could do was to retreat. My stout friend is particularly grieved that such a thing has occurred. He desires to make restitution as far as possible. Let the high priest come forward and accept a handful of rupees. That will prove their friendship."

The point is well taken, and Joe knows their weakness. Immediately a hubbub arises. Most of the crowd seem to be in favor of an eager accept-



ance. A few demur, but they are so much in the minority that they are speedily snowed under, and the *moulajee* comes forward to receive the promised rupees, a venerable man, who resembles the priest Joe saw in the mosque, though it cannot be the same.

Mynheer Joe has been careful to keep back a portion of the truth, because he fears lest it create new trouble. At the time of the sudden disaster, Sandy has been just putting the finishing touches to a picture of the ugly old idol Vishnu, and he has managed to retain his precious notebook through all the disturbance.

The humor of the crowd has changed as wonderfully as upon many a similar occasion, for there is nothing more fickle upon earth than a mob. The worshipers of old Vishnu are now eager to call the Americans their friends, though it is all done by word or gesture. Hand-shaking is generally tabooed in India, for a man fears lest he lose caste by touching another and have to inflict punishment on himself as a penalty.

Just at this moment there bursts into view a detachment of Sepoys, headed by a British officer, at whose side runs brave Molly Tanner. They come from the cantonment, and it is evident the colonel did not hesitate a moment when he learned that Mynheer Joe was in danger.

Of course, all are relieved when they see the three Americans uninjured and mark the change in the humor of the crowd. Molly cannot understand it, and as she affectionately greets her father she asks:

“What is this? One time these men seem eager



to murder you, and now they act as though on the best of terms!"

Demosthenes Tanner, still blowing hard from the effects of his wild run, jerks his thumb over his shoulder and remarks:

"It's all owing to Mynheer Joe. He palavered the heathen and made them believe we were doing their old god a real favor when we tumbled into the temple through the window, after the beastly platform gave way."

"Indeed! He seems a wonderful man, governor," murmurs the girl, stealing a look at the object of her thoughts, who, just then, is engaged in conversation with the British officer, explaining the cause of the sensation.

"Yes, my dear child. Such logic as he possesses would even enthuse the Illinois senate. Why, unless you're on your guard, he can easily bring you around to his way of thinking and make you believe black is white."

The girl turns her head away again, this time to hide her rosy cheeks; she blushes without hardly knowing why, save that there is something in her father's manner of speaking that seems like a sly allusion and warning to herself. Love is very sensitive, especially at that stage where the modest young woman awakens to the condition of her own heart, and the backward young man has not yet gathered courage enough to storm the citadel which he hopes to capture.

As the crowd rapidly increases, with evening coming on apace, it is deemed best to leave the scene and retire. The soldiers right about face and



head back toward the cantonment after the four Americans have entered a *palkee gharry* and started for their hotel.

Mynheer Joe decides that the baron can hardly be held accountable for this affair, since no stretch of the imagination could invest him with the power to weaken the platform and hurl the two adventurous lookers-on in Venice through the window of the temple of Vishnu.

As the incident has really been productive of no more ill than relieving Tanner's pocket of so many rupees, which he can easily afford to offer at the shrine of the idol, they feel that they can well afford to laugh over the adventure now.

This is especially the case when, after Joe has eloquently translated his speech and told how he praised the beauties of Vishnu, Sandy passes his notebook to Molly, and her eyes fall upon the well-executed *fac-simile* of the hideous idol these benighted people worship.

Her laughter breaks forth like rippling water, and the deep bass of the governor joins in the tide.

Passers-by turn and survey the *shigram* with amazement, as though wondering what manner of passengers it contains.

They reach the snug little hotel as night is casting her mantle over Bombay. A young moon nearing the half-way stage hangs high in the heavens, proving that it will not be dark at least.

Thus their first day in India has passed, and, as we have seen, it has not been without its adventure. If the record is kept up, their stay in Bombay must be an eventful one.



One of Joe's first duties upon visiting the barracks is to deliver a message from the commandant at Cairo, which probably contains information respecting Baron Popoff; for the officer who reads it looks very grave and asks the American many questions concerning the doings of the Russian, which Joe, fortunately, is in a position to answer.

At this time, England is greatly disturbed over the actions of Russia's ruler. He is said to be making preparations for pushing south through the Afghan territory to a point where his troops will be knocking at the door of India. A great railroad is about to be built for strategic purposes, and no one positively knows where it is aimed at—meaning no British subject.

Hence, the appearance of a shrewd Russian diplomat and secret agent, like the baron, upon the soil of India, is likely to create a sensation. His name has been connected with numerous unscrupulous political moves in Bulgaria and Roumania and all along the Balkans, so that it long ago became thoroughly known to all the reading world. Those who watch the moves upon the chess-board of Europe can see deep purpose in every action, however careless it may appear to the casual looker-on.

Those officers stationed in India have, of course, a peculiar interest in everything the White Czar does. They are threatened by no other nation. France is busy in Tonquin and Algiers; Germany in Central Africa; Italy in Abyssinia, while Austria has no foreign policy, and Spain is concerned almost wholly in her West India possessions. It is Russia who stretches her vast domains across from



Atlantic to Pacific, and yearns to reach the Indian Ocean as well. Year after year she placates the tribes *en route*, slowly but surely stretching her hand nearer the prize. The day will certainly come when the fiercest war Asia has ever known will be fought on neutral territory between these two giants. One has only to travel to India by the overland route, *via* Herat, to see the evidences of Russian encroachment. Almost up to the gates of India the traveller finds, here and there along the road, Russian *robats*, or small wayside houses of refuge, erected through charity, where the weary pilgrim can pass a night without any charge for the shelter.

No reasonable man doubts that England must some day be prepared to fight for her Indian empire; nor is there any reason to believe but that she will be able to hold her own against that cunning foe who would creep in at the back door while the mistress is engaged in sweeping and garnishing the front of the house.

Whatever may be the mission of the baron to India, now that his presence is known, it is not likely that he will be allowed to go about without some sort of secret espionage.

When the evening meal has been disposed of, Sandy and Mynheer Joe decide to see what Bombay looks like after nightfall. So they dress as quietly as possible, not forgetting to carry their firearms, as there must always be a certain amount of danger traversing the streets alone.

Mr. Grimes hopes to be all right by morning, but thinks he had better rest until then. Molly complains of a headache, probably the result of her



exciting race for assistance, and begs to be excused. This has an influence upon Mynheer Joe in inducing him to accept Sandy's proposal that they take a stroll, for he has no desire to spend the evening alone, Demosthenes complaining of bruises received in his tumble, which he wishes to bathe.

Peace reigns in the neighborhood of the little hostelry near the foot of Malabar Hill, save in one quarter. Joe draws the attention of his artist-correspondent comrade to the rear of the hotel, whence loud voices of discussion come. The row seems to be between the *bobajee* and a *mussaljee* under him. The cook berates the scullion, and the latter assumes a ridiculously dramatic attitude, with his head cocked on one side. Sandy eagerly takes it in. If he could only reproduce that scene on paper, it would be a dandy. At any rate, his memory is good, and he may succeed.

As they walk on in the soft, balmy moonlight, the angry voice of the *bobajee* continues to float after him. Finally there is a hubbub, and they know he has launched forth other arguments than mere words.

It is not long before they have reached the native quarter. Perhaps some unusual festival is taking place ; at any rate, the shops and bazars are lighted up and throngs are on the street. As in the densely populated cities of China, the people of Bombay seem to have no particular time of rest, unless during the hot part of the day their enthusiasm dwindles to a low peg. Night's cooling breezes bring them all out-of-doors, and the noise reminds a traveller of carnival time in Rome.



Lanterns of every color, made of paper or muslin, hang about the streets and in the shops, sending a strange light upon the picturesque crowd. Sandy's artistic soul is charmed by the spectacle. He seems to never tire of drinking it in, no detail escaping his eye, and all the while he utters exclamations that are indicative of his rapture.

As for Mynheer Joe, he is more reserved in his manner, and yet enjoys the sight almost as well as the correspondent.

They seem to excite no curiosity as they move along. The natives are accustomed to meeting English-speaking people at all turns; slowly but surely they are leaving the ways of their ancestors, already more than two million having become Christians.

England allows full freedom of worship. The only things she set her iron heel upon were some barbarous customs, such as the juggernaut-car and its slaughter, the putting to death of widows when the head of a family died, and like practices, for which Brahmins, Parsees and Mussulmans alike have actually become thankful, as these things were relics of ancient barbarism that clung to the country.

Such sights the two travellers look upon—here is a retail grocery with many odd things upon the shelves, and the queerest object about the place is probably the *banija* himself; indeed, Joe declares he must be a natural clown from his dress, while Sandy berates himself for not having one of the new style little cameras with him, by means of which he could secure a masterpiece for a subject.



Next door is a shelf-like shop, where all manner of *bric-à-brac* may be found, anything that is *bizarre* having a place, and the Hindoo proprietor, smoking his hubble-bubble nods wearily over his Koran.

Here are some snake-charmers, such as exhibited their tricks and horrid pets upon the square of Esbehiyeh, in Cairo. Then comes a merry fakir, known as a *bickharrie* here, shouting out his wares. Next we have some mountebank athletes, performing wonderful feats in agility, with perhaps a wizard who can make a tree grow in the middle of the street, with full-sized leaves and birds singing in the branches; while it is not uncommon to run across a group of howling dervishes, who take the place of our New York little German band, making night hideous in a certain locality, passing the hat around, and then forced to move on by indignant shopkeepers, who are glad to buy them off.

All of these sights and many more can be seen around the streets of Bombay. Occasionally an elephant looms up, but these animals are found more in the interior. Of monkeys there is no end. One need not be at all surprised to feel his hat suddenly jerked from his head, and, looking up, see an agile fellow climbing to the top of a house with it. Then the monkey-police have to be summoned and various maneuvers resorted to in order to recover the lost headgear.

One wonders why these things are allowed until he discovers that the Hindoos, as a class, are believers in theosophy. They look upon these animals as unfortunate human beings undergoing punishment for some past.



Thus there are many things going on all the time in this strange city. One need never grow weary with seeing the same sights, since there is a constant variation. The blending of bright colors in the shifting panorama is what pleases Sandy most of all, and he is ever on the watch for a new variety of turban, of which there seems to be an endless number.

Mynheer Joe has given Kassee the freedom of the city during their stay, well knowing that the intelligent Hindoo will not abuse the privilege. As Kassee has been informed concerning the baron and his ways, it may be presumed that he will keep a jealous eye upon the Russian. This is what Joe wishes, for he knows that, as a spy, his servant has no superior.

To the surprise of the traveller they discover this same Kassee walking along the street in company with another Hindoo, and both of them seem to be in rather a convivial frame of mind.

The servant happens to catch his master's eye, and makes a rapid hand-signal that gives Joe solid satisfaction, since it tells him that the other is on the alert, and means something by his actions.

Sandy does not see this side-show. He is eagerly taking in the sights, and as they have now reached a portion of the grand-bazar street where the lights are more plentiful, and the shops present the finest appearance, it is really worth his time to observe these things.

Here is a *sannar*, or goldsmith, displaying his quaint wares in a most attractive form, and by eloquent silence inviting the passers-by to purchase.



Then there are curiosity shops where a thousand and one queer things have been gathered from the four ends of the earth. Perhaps the next place will belong to a mosaic worker, and his shop is certainly a model of neatness.

At a turbanmaker's Sandy stops some time to see the yards of costly cloth twisted into odd shapes, each tuft being afterward pointed with gold or silver cloth. These turbans are the delight of the Hindoos, and the man who has a new shape is the envied of his fellows.

After this comes a variety of shops, from silversmith's down to the *durzee's*, or tailor's. Our friends take it in, and will never in all likelihood forget the sights their eyes rest upon. The crowd is such a good-natured one and, most delightful of all, does not push and surge as crowds generally do. In their long walk the two friends do not remember having touched but one man, who stumbled against them and then rushed away as if filled with alarm. Sandy, recognizing an old game of the thieves in London and Paris, at once looks to see if his watch is all right, and upon finding it so is relieved.

"Well," remarks Mynheer Joe, at last, "the hour is late. Have you seen enough for one night, old fellow?"

Sandy nods.

"My head is crammed full of ideas, which I must put into some shape before I sleep. This has been a revelation to me, Joe. I never before saw such life as old Bombay presents. Think of the rough sketches I've already drawn—the weird Towers of Silence, that wonderful burial-place of the Brahmins



—that magnificent statue out on the avenue—the Parsee broker—what 's his name?"

"Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy," smiles Joe.

"Drops from your tongue like oil, old fellow. I must practice on these names. About the sketches: I have the harbor, the strange coasting-craft you pointed out, a *patamar* with its two masts, the small rakish *manche* and the long, narrow *felucca* with its lateen sails. Besides, I 've got glimpses of mosques, that lovely idol and an array of such things, to say nothing of the ideas now in my head which, roughly drawn, will fill pages in the note-book. Yes, I 'm in clover, Joe, and I—"

Mynheer Joe has left his side, which fact causes the voluble Sandy to turn around. He discovers his companion talking earnestly with a Hindoo, and, looking more closely, recognizes Kasseer, whose brown face is very serious, and whose whole manner proclaims that there is trouble brooding in the air for the Americans in Bombay.







## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE FATAL THIRTEEN.

Sandy chances to be a wise little fellow, and evinces no surprise at the state of affairs. He guesses instinctively that Kasee has made a discovery of some importance, and is now communicating the result of his work to the master he loves so well.

Somehow it seems quite natural that they should get into a tangle, that mystery should crop up around them. They are surrounded by strange scenes, which the human mind could hardly imagine without a positive experience. The very air of India seems to breathe of mystery, as though it were impregnated with it.

He watches Mynheer Joe and the Hindoo with considerable curiosity, while keeping an eye upon the crowd near by, as if seeking to discover whether any one else is interested in them.

Joe now appears to be questioning his faithful servitor, as though he has heard it all and knows



that it is serious. At the same time he does not exhibit alarm, for his experience has been great in the past, and he knows how to preserve his mental equilibrium in the face of the most astounding difficulties.

“Ten to one it’s all on account of that miserable Russian. I expected to hear from him again. What in the deuce is the sly rascal up to now?” mutters the correspondent, as he twirls his cigar between finger and thumb and keeps his eyes fastened upon his friend.

He sees Joe look around him, as though seeking the danger of which he has been warned. Then their eyes meet. The traveller cannot help but note the eager look upon the face of Sandy. He smiles and beckons to him.

This, of course, means that he is to be in it; and as the correspondent usually manages, by hook or crook, to get there, he feels satisfied that matters are shaping themselves all right. It suits him to meet difficulties as they fly. Sandy was never known to turn his back on the foe.

With his curiosity aroused to a most intense pitch, the correspondent, therefore, advances to the fray. He casts a keen glance at the face of Mynheer Joe, but that worthy shows little of the emotions that may lie deeply hidden under the calm exterior.

Thus Sandy draws up alongside of his friend and awaits the communication that is to decide a momentous epoch in their lives; nor is it long in forthcoming.

“Well, the baron has been at work, Sandy,” remarks Joe, with a peculiar smile. “I knew he



would not be long in Bombay without attempting some manner of evil against us, particularly myself, for whom he entertains no great love, you understand."

Sandy nods his head in that vigorous, thoughtful way of his, more eloquent than words.

"Kassee fortunately has had his eyes open and been able to discover what is going on. Only for that we might have been taken unawares, and serious consequences have resulted."

Sandy pricks up his ears, and his itching hand makes a movement in the direction of the pocket where he keeps his note-book, as though this may be some news that concerns the general public; but he remembers in time, and forbears. With a smile at his action, the traveller continues:

"He has had men in sympathy with him right here under the noses of the British officials in Bombay, strange though it may appear to you. Perhaps there is something rotten in the state of Denmark, and England may awaken some day to find a wonderful uprising in the heart of her rich Indian possessions, or I'm no prophet, unless—"

"Well," remarks Sandy, solemnly, when his friend comes to this pause, significant in itself, "unless what, friend Josephus?"

"The conspiracy is nipped in the bud. This can be done by the overthrow of Baron Popoff now."

"By Jove, what a pity you were not a subject of the queen, Joe!" grunts Sandy.

"Why so, old man?"

"Under such circumstances you would have seen your duty clearly; at the time you fought that duel



with the baron, your sword could and would have nipped this Russian conspiracy in the bud, by ending the baron on the banks of the Nile. If his body were resting in one of those ancient tombs among the hills of Mokkatam, Popoff would not be able to arouse the people of this benighted country to rise against their British masters and throw off the yoke of England in order to assume one much more galling—that of the White Czar.”

Mynheer Joe thoughtfully rubs the end of his nose, as though by that operation he might arouse his thinking faculties. Then he turns with a smile upon his friend.

“I begin to see you were right, my dear boy. That mistake may cause me no end of trouble, and yet something held my hand when I had the chance to finish the baron. It is beyond me to explain the feeling that came over me. I only know it existed. You’ve seen just such periods in your own life, when a power controlled your actions. Let that go. What I want to tell you now concerns us both, since you appear to be in the same ship as myself. In ten hours the Russian has formed a plan of action to bring about our destruction. We are in the web!”

He says this as coolly as though asking for fire on account of a neglected cigar ; not the least trace of emotion can be detected in his voice. One would not imagine that he refers to their lives being in jeopardy through this plot of the baron’s.

As for Sandy, he shows that he can take the matter just as coolly. Even if the enemy be near, advancing on the double-quick, so to speak, that is no



reason a man of nerve should be rattled and lose his presence of mind.

“Ah! Couple of foolish flies, eh? The bloated old spider has managed to spin a web around us while we’ve been taking in the sights of Bombay. Is that the trick, Joe?” he remarks.

“Something in that strain, you’ll find, friend Sandy. I haven’t been quite able to make it out myself yet; but, all the same, it’s as plain as the nose on your face that this shrewd old chap has been working while we were playing, and in that way has stolen a march on us nicely. Listen now, and you shall have some particulars.”

Mynheer Joe casts a glance around, as though he would use at least all ordinary caution. Then he gives the eager war correspondent the benefit of his late interview with faithful Kasse.

Sandy’s manner is something of a thermometer, indicating his feelings. When the story grows warm, he restlessly fingers his cigar, twirling it between his thumb and finger. As a quiet portion of the recital is reached, he puffs unconcernedly at the weed or else idly flips the ashes from the end.

All the while he imbibes the facts which fall from the lips of Mynheer Joe. Sandy is much of the nature of a sponge. He greedily sucks in all he can reach, but means to give it out again upon the least pressure. That is his business in life—to take and give, retaining nothing. If what issues from his pen is garbed in a new dress, so that it can hardly be recognized as the same impression that he received, that is in the nature of things and only to be expected; for Sandy himself is the wonderful machine that grasps



the rough material, and with its magic breath transforms it into the daintiest of fabrics.

It can be readily set down, therefore, that the active little newspaper man is a good listener. His memory is astonishingly tenacious for one so accustomed to making notes, and he will not forget a word of what has been said.

It is a thrilling narrative Joe gives him, and would even be so were it any other than themselves thus placed in danger. At the same time, Joe makes no rhetorical flourishes in his narrative, but gives it in a plain, every-day style, such as appears to be a part of his nature.

Perhaps their unique surroundings have something to do with lending the story color and making it appear more romantic. This is clearly possible, because the bright costumes, the strange language, the *bizarre* contents of the shelf-like shops where the proprietors sit cross-legged, smoking calmly and awaiting the advent of customers. All these things, seen and heard under the numerous colored lights that make Bhendy Bazar Road seem like a glimpse of fairyland, must have their effect upon the sensitive nerves, and cause one to look upon the affair in quite another humor than might be the case were it all done under the garish light of day and amid other less powerful surroundings.

What the full text of Mynheer Joe's narrative may be does not concern us just at present. In good time its nature must be laid bare, and all its details discussed, as the anticipated thunderbolt falls upon our friends.

Sandy feels that the situation is grave and realizes



his position in the matter. Before he can give an expression to his feelings, however, the traveller steps on his foot. It is no accident but an intentional dig that carries a warning with it, and quick to heed these things the little man bubbles out with a laugh, that causes the last of the serious look to fly from his face.

“Capital joke, that of yours, Joe. Ah, you sly dog, always working in your little pun! It’s a beastly shame to impose on an unsophisticated Yankee like myself. Never mind, I’ll have my eye-teeth cut if I remain long in such disreputable company, I warrant you.”

While thus delivering himself Sandy is casting his eyes around in the hope of discovering the cause of Joe’s sudden new departure. What enemy has approached near enough to give the wary explorer alarm?

The first discovery Sandy makes is that Kasse, faithful Kasse, no longer stands near the elbows of his master, but has vanished as completely as though the earth has opened and swallowed him. Of course, it is not a very difficult task for a native to mingle in the crowd and lose himself, but a white man would have much more trouble, as he must be one among dozens, and his identity can be detected even some distance away.

Looking further Sandy believes he can place the threatening danger. As if by mere accident, several ugly-looking Hindoos are near them. They do not move on with the crowd but linger in that one spot, which in itself seems to indicate an intention to do mischief.



Sandy has not had any actual experience with the dreaded society of Thugs in India, but he knows much of their past history and has imbibed numerous stories concerning their evil deeds. He is also aware of the fact that although Great Britain has dealt very severely with all members of this dreaded society, whenever their guilt could be proven, her strict laws have had little effect in intimidating the bravos of cord and creese. As a general rule, their work is carried on among the people of their own nationality, but there have been times when foreigners have come under the ban, although the secret order is chary of indulging in such pastime as it always results in additional energy on the part of the government to stamp out the Curse of India.

It strikes Sandy very broadly, as he notes the presence of these fellows, that they are standing upon the brink of a precipice, where it will not require much of an effort to hurl them over. At such a critical time, it is wonderful what confidence he has in the magnetic man beside him. With Mynheer Joe to hold up the other end of the log, it does not seem as though he need fear all the combination of evil that can be brought to bear against them. Joe is a natural-born leader, and needs nothing beyond the occasion to develop his powers.

“Keep close at my side, Sandy; we have here an enemy somewhat different from any you may have met—certainly as unlike the cowardly Arabs who tackled you in the dark streets of Cairo, as day is from night. Of course, you are armed—don’t answer, simply nod. That’s good. I feared you



might have overlooked the little gun. If the worst comes, remember we are marked men, and let every bullet find its billet, In plain words, Sandy, shoot to kill. Savvy?"

The other grunts a response that seems to satisfy Joe, who continues in the same low voice:

"I am in hopes that I may be able to ward off this threatened attack. Much depends upon the branch of the secret order these Thugs belong to. At any rate, be ready to do your duty. I must fire the first shot and, when that sounds, let go all. When these fellows get ready for business, you will hear a peculiar call, loud and shrill. That cry is known by every Hindoo, and means that if they know what is good for themselves and families, they will keep shy of the spot and leave the worthy Thugs to carry out their own sweet will. Hence you see, Sandy," removing his cigar for a moment in a nonchalant way, "we need expect no assistance from this crowd."

"Luckily, I hadn't counted on it, Joe," remarks the other, in something of the same humor.

"It will be a sight worth looking at when the signal is given. Keep your eyes open, friend. You will receive a sensation—that of being perhaps the first man for whose benefit the signal has been given and who lives to tell the tale."

This is enough in itself to arouse Sandy's hopes. Wide-awake he generally is, but just now his eyes seem popping out of his head with eagerness.

They saunter slowly on, while their body-guard—for such the ugly-looking squad of Thugs appears to be—keeps them company. At the same time,



their number increases. Sandy can, with only a casual glance, count a dozen men wearing the same peculiar style of turban. There is something odd and even grotesque about it to him, now that he notes the fact that every one of the Thugs wears one. Other turbans he has noticed, but there seems to be a peculiar significance about this one, which can only be explained by the fact that he knows the nature of the society that appears to have adopted it.

Why does not the critical moment come? Are the Thugs waiting for a certain spot to be reached where the blood of the foreigners shall drench the soil?

It is a sensation to remember, this walk along the bustling Bhendy Bazar Road, with its peculiar sights and sounds and odors, all the while attended by a select body-guard from the picked members of a secret society of assassins, the ramifications of which extend even beyond the limits of India's wide borders.

The most interesting part of the business comes in just here: this body-guard has not their good at heart and does not thus convoy them in order to ward off danger. On the contrary, each and every individual member of it has been bound by his oath to effect the death of the two Americans. Their orders come from headquarters, and they obey with the blindness that generally marks the actions of these children of destiny. How are they to know that it is the Russian's gold that has bought their leaders? Little they care, since their oath binds them to blindly obey.



It is coming soon. Sandy notes that numbers of the people have already edged away. When their eyes note the strange turbans worn by these men and count the number, the fatal thirteen, they exhibit all the signs of sudden fear, and, turning, hasten from the spot in undisguised alarm.

Still Mynheer Joe shows no alarm himself, strange man that he is. What can he be made of to thus calmly face a death that most men shudder to contemplate? Really the fellow must have been born without nerves, he has such remarkable control over himself.

They have by slow stages reached a point on the road where the bazars are thickest, and ordinarily here can be seen the most interesting of all the sights Bombay offers to the curiosity-seeker.

"Listen," says Joe, suddenly, "it is coming!"

He tosses the remnant of his cigar away, as if tired of smoking. Sandy hastens to follow suit, for he wants his vision to be as clear as his other faculties are at this moment.

Mynheer Joe has not made a blunder in the matter of time. At the very moment Sandy relieves himself of his cigar there rises above the babel of voices, a startling sound. Sandy has never heard anything like it before and, please Heaven, he does not want to again, since he knows what it signifies.

The effect is astounding. A dead silence reigns where before all was bustling confusion. People appear to shrink away, so quickly do they get their bodies out of sight. This is part of the business that amazes Sandy. He sees the eager tradesman stop in the midst of a sentence and no longer



attempt to sell his wares. It would be useless anyway, since his late customer has apparently merged into space, the spot that once knew him knowing him no longer. Thus it is with all—they melt away as does the snow on an April morning when the sun rises.

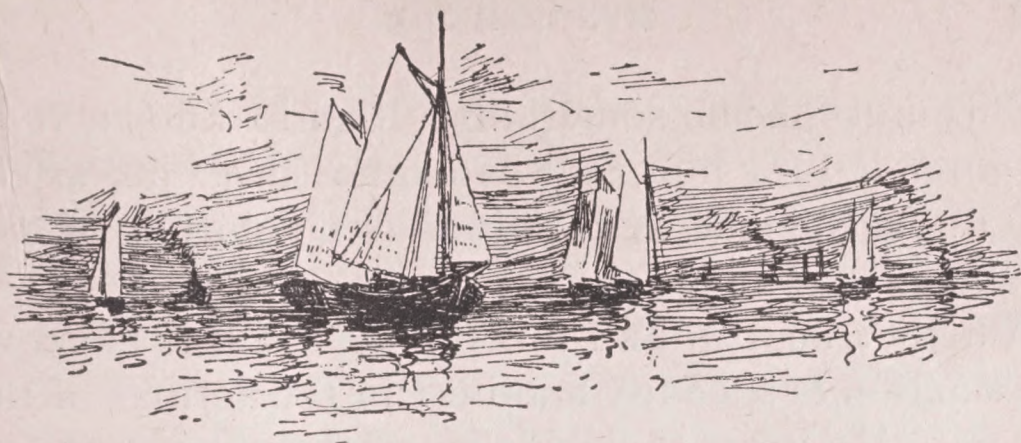
Perhaps Sandy can count thirty while this change is taking place around them, or it might be he will be able to cover only half of that number, so speedily is the metamorphosis accomplished.

In one particular there is no change. The fatal thirteen Thugs still surround them. Not an avenue of escape has been left open. Plainly, if they live through this night it must be because they are able to meet the assaults of the enemy with not only a bold front but weapons that lessen the number of the odds against them at every discharge.

Sandy has produced his revolver, but he clearly remembers his companion's explicit instructions, and will not fire until Mynheer Joe gives the word, even though these fierce bravos of Bombay advance to the attack and smite them hip and thigh.







## CHAPTER XX.

### EVEN THE THUGS OBEY HIS NOD.

There is another factor in the game, however, which Sandy has not suspected. Knowing Mynheer Joe as he does, he fails to sound the full depth of that strange man's powers. Although the traveller has also produced a revolver and shows an entire willingness to use it should the occasion arise, he still holds back.

There is a method in his madness. For Sandy thinks it borders on this, not to begin operations upon the enemy at once, so they may in a measure paralyze their attack.

Mynheer Joe knows what he is about. From his lips there suddenly issues a strange sound, unlike anything Sandy ever heard. It is undoubtedly a signal of some sort. His amazed eyes are glued on Joe. He sees him make a peculiar pantomine gesture with his hand—the one which has not been occupied in grasping a weapon.



This must mean something. Sandy knows it is not intended for him, and hence he turns his attention upon the enemy to discover a solution of the mystery.

Whether he can find this out or not, the effect of Joe's action is speedily manifest in the actions of the Thugs. He hears their exclamations of amazement, sees the looks of wonder which they cast upon the traveller. Instead of a forward rush to annihilate him and his friend, there is a shrinking back on the part of the thirteen.

What can this mean? Mynheer Joe continues to wave his hand in that strange manner, and the thirteen terrible foes retreat slowly but surely in every direction.

Sandy is forcibly reminded of a certain picture in the pantomime where the good spirit appears upon the scene, and the evil workers retreat in dismay, endeavoring to shield their eyes from the dazzling light that nearly blinds them, for everything that is evil hates the light.

He is bewildered by what he sees, and yet, although the cause is a perfect blank, the effect is plainly evident—even he who runs may read: These Thugs fear Mynheer Joe.

Sandy's admiration for the man takes an upward bound. He realizes that much as he has known of the other, Joe possesses qualities which he has never even suspected as existing.

In less than half a minute after the traveller has uttered that strange sound, the thirteen Thugs have backed out of sight. The coast is clear and gradually the people resume their interrupted trade rela.



tions—the merchant calls attention to his stock, the customer takes it upon himself to buy.

As the people come thronging back upon the road of the bazars, it can be noticed that they cast anxious glances around them. They seem to expect to look upon something lying hither or yon—something that is apt to fill their souls with horror, and yet which possesses a deep attraction.

Sandy notes these glances cast around, and being a bright-minded chap, intuitively guesses their meaning. They are looking for the victims of the Thugs, and upon failing to discover one or more bodies lying upon the road, with life rendered extinct through the agency of cord or creese, cannot but feel the greatest amazement.

Then their looks turn upon the two Americans, as though they have guessed that these worthies are the ones against whom this uprising of the secret society took place. It must have been some mistake after all. Philosophically they determine this, and return to their various pursuits, though glances full of wonder greet Mynheer Joe and his companion at every turn.

As for Sandy himself, he follows the other along the street in a half stupefied way. It seems to him Joe can do anything. If the Hindoos were about to place them both upon one of the funeral pyres along the ghauts bordering the river, Sandy believes Joe is wizard enough to change the fire into ice, and cause the vengeful destroyers to fall upon their knees in humble servitude. After this exhibition, he will not doubt Joe's power to accomplish any wonder. So they pass along, and by degrees enter among a



new lot of natives, who ignorant of the event that has so recently transpired, do not view them in that strange way. Sandy is burning with deep curiosity. By nature he abhors mysteries, and is just as curious as any woman could ever be.

Plainly then, he puts the question to Joe, begging to know by what spirit of necromancy the other managed to dissolve the dark clouds that hung so threateningly over their heads.

"It's all as simple as falling off a log. The whole thing lies in knowing how to do it," he remarks, whereat Sandy adds:

"A second Columbus making the egg stand on end? Suppose you illustrate matters, my dear fellow, and show us how the thing is done."

"Perhaps you saw me make a signal, and the rascals obey. You wonder what that could mean. Truth to tell, Sandy, I am a member of the very organization which our unscrupulous enemy, the baron, has subsidized in order to complete our downfall."

At this intelligence, the newspaper man loses his head and looks silly. His ideas even become confused, and he wonders whether Joe is not giving him a little chaff. Up to the present he has believed himself too old a bird to be caught in this way; but such strange things have occurred of late that he stands ready to take almost anything as gospel truth.

"Oh, you're a full-fledged Thug, eh?" he manages to murmur.

"Not only that, but an officer in the organization. It was as such I gave the sign that threw those fellows into a fever."



"How do you come to belong to such a lovely crowd?" asks Sandy.

"Ah, my dear fellow, that is a story you shall hear some day! Really, it is worth telling, since it is founded upon strange incidents such as only a Haggard could use with credit. For the present, let it suffice to say that this ancient order has more about it than the general world knows. It is not organized for murder, as you and other people believe, although the Thugs of India, like the Nihilists of Russia, do not hesitate to remove anyone who runs against their will.

"A series of strange adventures threw me into the midst of them some years ago, and to preserve my life I was obliged to join the order, attaining a high place of honor before the opportunity came to quit India's shores.

"I can now see very plainly why that same thing occurred to me, for you and I must have fallen victims to the fury of the mob only for my power."

"By the way, Joe, have you any more of these little bombs hidden away? If so, put them to good use, man. There's no telling when we may need them in this country. Bless my soul! I have a strange feeling all the while as though invisible danger was hanging over our heads. What can it mean?"

"When the baron ceases to annoy us, you will get over that, Sandy. The truth of the matter is you have fallen into the habit of feeling his presence near you. These men of evil seem to exale a something that impresses itself upon those they hate, even as might the rattlesnake when charming a victim.



Once the serpent is trampled under foot, and all that uneasiness vanishes.

"You've changed your mind, then, and intend to make way with the baron?" says Sandy, quickly.

"Well, it becomes more evident every hour that it's a desperate case of Greek against Greek. Unless I demolish the baron he will down me."

"*Eureka!* That's my policy to a dot. The question is how it shall be done."

"That will come out all right, old man."

"I give myself no uneasiness with regard to it. Poor old Popoff! He'll carry out the name to a letter presently. But since he's shown himself to be such a consummate rascal, I no longer feel pity for him. Let him go. The king has commanded it; the decree must be entered," and Sandy makes a royal sweep with his arm that would cause many a monarch to turn green with envy, could he see it.

Mynheer Joe looks beyond, and sees things that a wise Providence screens from the eyes of impulsive fellows of Sandy's stripe. He knows that the life of the baron is exceedingly precious to the Russian authorities, and that they will make a searching investigation into matters in case he is downed; it may even be considered a *casus bellum*, and the two great countries be embroiled in a terrible conflict.

Thus Mynheer Joe, feeling the responsible nature of his position, resolves to do nothing rash. He desires to consult with some one who has a long head, and knows of no person more competent than Mr. Grimes. Sandy is all right when it comes to action, but he does not make the best adviser in the world, as Joe has learned before now.



It is high time they turn their steps in the direction of the hotel, as the hour is getting late.

Through the crowds they pass without any fear of violence, since they hold the good-will of the great secret society of India.

"Ah! There's the baron!" says Sandy. And Joe catches a glimpse of the Russian's face among the dark ones just beyond.

He reads surprise and baffled rage upon it, as though Popoff had already begun to understand that again his plans have been defeated by circumstances over which he has no control.

Mynheer Joe cannot help showing something of his feelings in his expression. The look is not a contemptuous one, for he has considerable respect in the direction of the shrewd baron. At the same time, he despises a man who will descend to the methods practiced by this agent of the czar.

If Joe chooses, he can meet him on a level, and, employing the same methods, influence the secret order of Thugs against the Russian, for he has power behind the throne. This does not happen to be his way. If the baron will not enter into another duel with him, he must employ some other honorable means for accomplishing his end.

They finally bring up at the hotel. The hour is not so late for those who make day out of night, but with travellers weary from a long sea journey and sight-seeing all day, it is an entirely different matter.

All have retired, and Joe is compelled to let the matter lie over to the morrow or else wake Mr. Grimes. This latter he would be tempted to do, as he believes the case requires prompt attention, only



that he remembers the *pseudo* silver king complained of a headache as well as a lame ankle.

So he determines to let matters rest until the morning. If all goes well, they can then discuss the affair with clear brains and decide upon the best course to pursue.

The day dawns upon the city of Bombay, and, as is usual, all soon becomes bustle and confusion. As the hour grows nearer noon, this enthusiasm will gradually die out and leave a sort of lethargy in its place, common to all warm climates.

Mynheer Joe is early on foot, and awaits the coming of his friend. When Mr. Grimes finally shows up he is greeted with a wink and a beckoning finger that draws him over to a retired spot, anxious to learn what new deviltry is in the wind.

Rapidly Joe sketches the adventure of the preceding night. The lapse of time has not changed his mind with regard to things, and he sees matters in just as serious a light as when the events occurred, ten hours before.

Mr. Grimes hears the story gravely. He makes a good listener, for he says nothing until the end is reached; but all the while he keeps up a-thinking. Of all people, he is the last to make a mountain out of a mole-hill; but there can be no disguising the fact that their situation is desperate when a man like the baron can set such diabolical machinery in motion against them.

He agrees with Mynheer Joe that the time has come to strike back. Perhaps his methods may differ from those of the traveller; for Mr. Grimes is a believer in the homeopathic adage, *similia similibus*



*curantur*—like is cured by like. When in Rome, he does as the Romans do, and adapts himself to circumstances. This has been one reason for his remarkable success. To a certain extent, Mynheer Joe has followed the same plan, but he cannot go so far as his friend in these matters, drawing the line at a certain point.

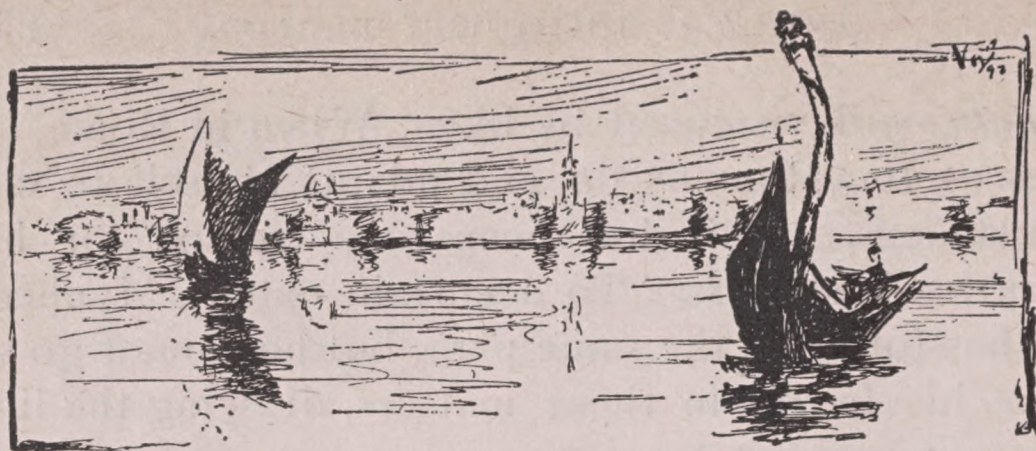
Thus, in order to meet at a common level, these two must both give way. It is advice Joe seeks, nothing more.

Mr. Grimes ponders over the matter. He does not often act from impulse, and chews the cud of reflection at the beginning of a crisis, not when it has passed by, his policy being that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

Finally he turns around and lays his finger upon the arm of the traveller. The light in his eye proclaims that he has conceived an idea, and Joe feels satisfied something is coming which it will pay him well to lay hold of—something that may cause the baron to believe he has struck an avalanche.

“Mynheer Joe, we must be up and doing. This miserable Russian shall not say he has beaten three Yankees in a game. I know your principles and respect them, but the baron is an obstacle to our progress. He must be removed.”





## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE BARON IS BOOKED FOR VALPARAISO.

“In the first place,” remarks Mr. Grimes, in that steady voice of his that never deviates, no matter what the excitement around him, “we must have the secret co-operation of the authorities in anything we undertake.”

“There will be no trouble about that—I have already put a flea in their ear. They know who the baron is and what the nature of his mission to India may be. Naturally then they hate him—naturally it is to their interest to dispose of this spy who comes to foment trouble. The question is how far will they go?”

“You can see some of them again, Joe?”

“Readily, sir.”

“Then we must fight fire with fire. Since the baron has inaugurated this system of tactics, we’ll give him all he wants. His Russian ways don’t go with people from the States. I wish we had him



out there. A noose and the limb of a tree would transport him to eternity, unless we thought it best to use a coat of tar and ornament it with feathers."

"That would be a prime ending of the game, sir, but unfortunately we are in a country where such enlightened arts are not known. Besides, the government would be held responsible for such a public taking-off. It will be better for us to have him transported."

"Certainly," remarks Joe, although he does not yet grasp the idea that is slowly taking form in the other's brain.

"In order to accomplish that, you and I must exercise our minds and arrange a plan by means of which the baron will step into a trap. We know his cunning, and whatever is done will have to be sugar-coated."

"That is quite right, Mr. Grimes."

"My plan, broadly speaking and without the details that must be arranged later, is something like this: We will arrange matters so that the baron steps into the little parlor of the spider. He sees a luscious morsel there and is tempted to devour it. Just then his feet are entangled in the web and he finds himself powerless. After that he leaves the country on board a sailing-vessel, to be landed perhaps on a desert island or conveyed to South America. The chances are ten to one he will never care to indulge in any more of these games in case he lives to reach Russia again."

"Your idea is a good one. Of course, it must be understood that under no circumstances will the



hand of the British authorities be seen in anything we undertake."

"That can be arranged easily enough. Things are often done *sub rosa*, and nothing left to tell the tale."

"Ah! A thought strikes me; let us have it out while I find it fresh on my mind. You spoke of an attractive bait."

Mr. Grimes bites his lips.

"That was it, Joe."

"You had something definite on your mind when you spoke in that way?"

"I did for a fact," watching his companion out of the corner of his eye.

"Someone I know, sir?"

"Well, I am free to confess it."

"Plainly, then, Mr. Grimes, you had reference to Miss Tanner."

"To be equally frank with you, I did, my boy. You frown. I understand your feelings to a dot. You have my sympathy, my dear fellow, if that will do you any good."

Mynheer Joe frowns savagely now.

"Give up the idea, sir."

"Why so?"

"Because I put my foot down upon it."

At this, the other arches his eyebrows and pretends to be taken aback. Not that he is at all convinced that his plans must be altered, for it chances that Mr. Grimes is quite a stubborn man in his way.

"Pardon me, Mynheer Joe, but for once I must decline to see your authority. This young woman has a father, and he is one of the party. I have had





THE FRENCH CAPTAIN CATCHES THE BARON.—See Chapter XV.







a talk with him. He gives his consent to the plan I sketched for his benefit."

"Confusion! Well, what if he does? Because a foolish father agrees to endanger his child's happiness, her life even, is that any reason I should also consent? Not for Joseph, sir. I come down flat-footed against the idea." And the traveller looks as though he might annihilate the person who could thus propose such a thing to him.

"The young lady agrees to it," says Grimes, in a most nonchalant manner.

"What! You have spoken of it to Molly?" flashes from Joe's lips. This hot-shot really crumbles his last bulwark away.

"Yes. You remember we three were left last night. I was about to retire, as I had a lame ankle and a headache, when a native servant came with a message from Tanner. I hobbled to his room and found Molly there.

"It struck me at once that there was something in the wind, for while the young lady's face looked serious, that of the Illinois legislator was black as a thunder-cloud. Before one word had been spoken, I was able to understand that trouble was in the air, and could give a shrewd guess as to who was to blame. In his own peculiar, blunt way, the senator began to tell me, now and then calling upon his daughter to refresh his mind. Thus I was soon in possession of the whole story.

"To be brief in telling you, it seems that the audacious baron has gotten ahead of you. Perhaps you noticed a native hand Miss Tanner a letter



while you were admiring the great temple of Mahaluxmee?"

"Jove! I do recollect it! Heard him say in good English: 'Read it when alone, lady,' and saw Molly mechanically slip it into her bosom. Then I forgot all about it, you know," says Joe, somewhat eagerly, his curiosity excited.

"That was a lost opportunity, my dear boy. Had you asked Molly to open it then and there, you could not have failed to tell her your secret."

"My secret, Mr. Grimes?" turning pale.

"Certainly. You love the girl and dare not tell her. Good heavens, man! The fact is patent to us all. 'Faint heart never won fair lady.' I'm astounded! You, as bold as a lion in everything else, to be a laggard in love. Go in and win, my boy. You've got a clear field, and the game is yours if you only show nerve enough to put out your hand and take it."

"Do you think so, my friend?"

"Why should you doubt it?"

"I will tell you, frankly: Ever since Molly learned that I was Joe Miner Carringford, she has not been the same toward me," the other says seriously, at which Grimes laughs with the air of a man of the world.

"Naturally so, Joe. There are two reasons for such a change on her part. In the first place, the fact that you are the heir makes her feel differently toward you. She fears lest people may suspect that she angles for you."

"To perdition with such gossips!" roars Joe.

"Exactly my feelings; but that doesn't mend



matters a particle. The other thing is what has influenced Molly most," continues Mr. Grimes.

"Well, what is the tenor of that?"

"You will forgive me if I am personal?"

"Of course."

"Then hark to the words of a man whose business it has been for years to read human nature, until from experience it has become very much like an open book to him. The hour that Molly learned the truth and knew the man who saved her from the cruel waters of the Mediterranean at Malta was no other than he whom she sought, the heir to vast estates—then she suddenly awoke to the consciousness of the fact that she loved him."

"God grant it!" almost whispers Joe.

"Her maidenly modesty put her on guard lest she betray her secret. That is all. Be the man in love you have even been in battle, Mynheer Joe; walk right up to the cannon's mouth, and the prize is yours."

"I will," responds Joe, with a sudden determination. "And yet, hang it all, Grimes, you don't know what a queer feeling comes over me whenever I start to tell of my love and look up into Molly's bright eyes. Somehow the words race into another channel of themselves. But see here, what did you mean about the baron getting ahead of me? Was that letter from *him*?" with a fierce frown.

"It was, offering his hand and heart, not to speak of his estates, at the feet of the queen of beauty whom we know as Molly Tanner."

Mynheer Joe looks serious.



"That was a confounded neat trick of his—proposing right under my nose. But I don't imagine he has any show. Do you, Grimes?"

"None at all, I assure you," with a grin at the anxiety apparent in Joe's voice.

"She knows him too well. Thank Heaven, there are *some* sensible American girls who will not sell themselves for a title!"

"Why, old Tanner tells me she has had proposals from Sir Hugh Trelawny and Lord Arthur Stanhope. She refused them because she did not love them! Think of it, man!"

"God bless her! She's worth the winning! And you think I'm safe, old fellow?"

"You've got the inside track, unless you let it go too long. In matters of this kind delays are always dangerous."

"Well, so long."

"Hold on, my friend; where away?"

"To find Molly; to tell her what a blockhead I am, and ask her to take me in hand," responds the man of action, at which his companion bursts into a roar.

"Time enough for that, Joe. Don't do it in an abrupt way. Watch your opportunity, man. The women—bless 'm—like to be wooed and won in the proper way. Many a girl has been frightened into saying *no* when she meant *yes* by the awful abruptness of her lover's proposal. Besides, I am just getting to business. Sit down and behave yourself."

"I suppose I must, but it's too bad I can't put my fate up to the test, now that I am all worked up. Ten to one when the chance comes again I'll prove



to be a miserable coward," mutters Mynheer Joe, who is developing some new and singular traits of late.

Mr. Grimes taps the forefinger of his right hand upon the palm of his left, as if to give an expression and force to his words.

"Although this proposal of the baron's was apparently couched in elegant language, there was a threat behind it. He says—"

"What!" cries Joe. "He dares threaten Molly, the miserable hound?"

"Even so. I don't know but that it is the custom in his country when a man of the nobility deigns to propose to one beneath him in their social rank. The Russians have peculiar ways as well as the Turks and Arabs. At any rate, this man has vowed to make Molly Tanner his wife, and means to raise Cain if she will not consent to become a baroness. He seems to consider it an honor to have asked her, and takes it for granted she will accept in spite of her father or any one else."

"I always did say he was a conceited ass. His ears give him away," grins Joe, whose hands are working nervously, as though in sympathy with his feelings. He would give all he ever expects to handle of his uncle's estate for the privilege of laying hold of that same Baron Popoff at this moment.

"True. But we must not deceive ourselves. He may be conceited; but, at the same time, he is a dangerous man."

"Ah! I grant you that. He plays with the sword as I have seen few men do. Yes, the baron is no fool, after all."



"We three discussed the matter thoroughly last night. I found the senator a level-headed man, and his daughter backed up propositions made by myself in a manner that did her credit. In the end we arrived at a conclusion, and the story you have told me this morning only convinces me we did the right thing."

"What was this conclusion?" asks Joe, as his companion looks down the avenue.

"Speak of the Old Nick and you'll get an odor of brimstone. Yonder goes the man we were talking about. Notice his arrogant strut. The natives seem to quail before him as I've never seen them do when in the presence of a British officer. Ah, it will be a sad day for poor India if the iron heel of the White Czar of all the Russias in ever set upon her borders!"

"Stop your philosophy. Come to business, Mr. Grimes. Tell me your plan without delay," growls Mynheer Joe, who cannot help sending a black look after the retreating form of the proud man who has crossed his path and seems destined to give him trouble.

"Well, here it is in a nutshell: Molly has consented to appear to favor his suit."

"Misery!" groans the traveller.

"Of course it is only assumed, for she solemnly assured me that if the baron were the last man on the face of the earth, she would not have him. This will in a measure pull the wool over his eyes, and we can lead him the easier into the trap. All of us seem to be of the same mind—that this man must be transported out of India. We had not decided



last night how this was to be done, but our morning talk has developed the idea."

"I am beginning to fall in with your plans. All I want is an assurance that Molly may not be assigned any duty to bring her into danger," Joe remarks, gravely.

"Readily given, my boy, and don't forget it. Let me map out your work this morning. I suppose money is no object here?"

"I am a man of wealth. Whole *lakhs* of rupees, as they say here, are at your disposal. Call on the senator and charge to my account. He told me to draw on him without stint."

"Good. Now listen. As soon as convenient I want you to hie away to the river ghauts, and find the owner of some vessel about to sail for South America or some far-away port. Make arrangements with him to take a secret passenger as a prisoner, a man whose ravings on the voyage must be treated as though he were a crazy man.

Mynheer Joe jumps up.

"Thunder and Mars! Why didn't I think of it before. Captain Ben is the very man! If the good ship *Avalanche* hasn't sailed yet, the baron stands a chance of landing at Valparaiso, in Chili, some months hence," he exclaims.





## CHAPTER XXII.

CAPTAIN BEN, OF THE GOOD SHIP "AVALANCHE."

A short time later, Mynheer Joe makes his way in the direction of the river, determined to carry out his share of the plan as proposed by Mr. Grimes. If the *Avalanche* has not already sailed, he is sure of hearty co-operation on the part of his friend, the Yankee skipper, and so far as this share of the contract is concerned, it can be set down as good as already accomplished.

There is considerable foreign shipping at Bombay, much of which lies in the river, as the Indian Ocean can be very treacherous, and great tidal waves have done a tremendous amount of mischief in the past.

When Mynheer Joe reaches the terraces, or ghauts, that line the river, he finds himself in the vicinity of the place where the dead are burned. A great pillar of smoke rises, and by glancing over a



wall he can see the funeral pyre, with all its primitive accessories, the sad mourners, the black attendants and the bodies that are being thus cremated, their ashes to be cast upon the sacred Ganges.

Although the weird spectacle might interest him at another time, just at present Mynheer Joe has something else on his mind which he cannot dismiss.

Eagerly he scans the surface of the water in search of the clipper ship. It was here Captain Ben told him the vessel lay. A number can be seen near by ; one bears the stars and stripes, and upon her Joe fastens his eyes.

He speedily makes her out to be the *Avalanche*, since she carries out the verbal description Captain Ben gave. To his chagrin, he sees signs that indicate an early sailing.

"By my life, they look as though they only wait for a boat that may be out! Another hour, and I might have missed him!" he exclaims aloud, when a heavy hand comes down with a thump in the middle of his back, and a hearty voice roars :

"Well done, Mynheer Joe! Reckon you 've come down to see what kind of a craft I sail. Go with me on board ; we can have some hours of chinning ere the anchor is heaved."

Of course, it is bluff Captain Ben himself, the old schoolmate with whom Joe tussled many a time in the days gone by. That worthy shakes hands eagerly now ; he could almost hug the Yankee sailor, such is his intense delight at seeing him.

"Impossible, Ben! I don't even want your men to see me, so that the cock-and-bull story you may



tell them later will have an air of probability about it."

"Eh! What 's in the wind now?" bursts out the other, looking in Joe's face.

"Come over here under this overhanging wall, and I'll tell you quite a yarn that may awaken your interest, even if it doesn't harrow up your blood. At any rate, I am in hopes that it will arouse your chivalry."

"Hello! Three to one there 's petticoats in it. Wouldn't talk about chivalry otherwise. Well, here 's Ben Hazen, rough sea-dog that he is, always willing to remember his mother—God bless her—and do a favor in her name when there 's a woman in trouble, not to speak of Daisy."

Mynheer Joe gives him a look that must thrill his heart, it is so full of thanks. Then, knowing the value of time, and desirous that the sailor shall learn all the particulars before making his decision, Joe starts in.

He is a fine story-teller, though some one else might do better just here, since so many of his own achievements enter into the affair, and he fails to even do them simple justice.

The captain gets an inkling of this fact, and makes ample allowances. Although he does not know all that Mynheer Joe has been doing of late years, Bombay has been ringing with his praise as the avenger of Brave Gordon; and, besides, Captain Ben has not forgotten that his friend was ever modest even in their old school-days.

Several times he stops Joe to ask questions, for it is plainly evident that he wants to know all that is



going on. At last the story is done. Captain Ben holds his head with both hands, and seems to be studying the ground between his feet. Joe does not disturb him, but calmly lights a cigar. He knows his man, and does not fear for the final result.

All at once the sailor puts out a horny hand.

"Shake, Joe, old boy," he says quietly.

"Well?" accepting the palm.

"You can count upon me."

"That means—"

"The baron will have the chance of his life to study the geography of that quaint Chilian city of Valparaiso ere many months elapse."

"I thought I knew you, Ben," said the elated Joe on hearing the bluff captain's words, expressing agreement with his plans. "Now, as to the pay for this risky job—"

"The what?" bellows the excitable skipper.

"I mean just what I say. I'm a man of wealth, and you have your way to make in the world. I must arrange a decent price for this business. What would be fair? A thousand dollars—"

"Three times too much," grumbles Ben.

"Well, I shall put something in your hand before you sail, and don't you open it on your life, old man. I haven't forgotten the demure little girl you were sweet on as a boy, and who you tell me is now your wife. When you get home to Philadelphia about next Christmas, place this in her hand and tell Daisy it comes from her old schoolmate, Joe Miner."

"I'll do that with pleasure, Joe, only don't make the present too costly. Daisy and I have often



talked of you. This is my last long voyage. If I live through it, I am promised a captain's berth on one of the new Clyde coasting steamers running out of New York."

"How many children have you, Ben?"

"Two—Marguerite and Joe."

"What! You named your boy—"

"After the only chap who could outwrestle, out-throw, outrun me at school—the same boy who dragged me out of the Delaware when I went in through the ice—one Joe Miner, who actually wants to pay me now for doing him a small favor."

"Small favor be hanged! This man is a secret emissary of the czar."

"All right."

"You may get into a war with Russia."

"Well, I can lick 'em," with a grin.

"Joking aside, Ben, this is a serious business, and you must neglect no opportunity to shield yourself, for trouble is almost sure to come of it."

"Oh, I'm willing enough to appear an innocent tool of yours or an unknown party shipping this crazy Russian out to Valparaiso. I've no desire to embroil my beloved country in a war with the czar. Why, they might capture Philadelphia, and, think of it, my little home is on the outskirts!"

"Well, let's talk now about the plan to be pursued: You must have a document, written by some fictitious person, asking whether you would be willing to take as a passenger to Valparaiso a gentleman who, at times, is a little out of his head and may have to be treated as a prisoner; that if suitable



terms can be arranged, he will be brought aboard at a certain hour."

"That 's straight enough. Meanwhile, I 'll enter several notes on the log about receiving such and such a letter. Trust two Pennsylvania Dutchmen for hatching up a plot to confuse the natives, eh, Joe?"

They talk a little longer, and the details are arranged so that there may be no blunder. Unless some accident occurs, the shadow of which has not yet been seen, they appear to have a firm hold upon the game, and the chances indicate a sudden and astonishing surprise, together with an unexpected sailing on the part of the Russian nobleman.

When Mynheer Joe leaves the skipper of the *Avalanche*, he has arranged everything to his satisfaction. They understand each other thoroughly and nothing is lacking save the production of the baron's body.

Joe has plenty more to do. Already half the morning has passed, and the heat grows more and more intense. He has become somewhat used to it during his Soudan campaign, and calls himself a salamander, since he never flinches from the hottest sun.

From the Burning Ghaut, as the place of incineration on the river-bank is called, he heads once more for the hotel at the foot of Malabar Hill. Bombay is bustling with life, from distant Mazagon on one side to Calabah on the other. Joe finds it difficult to even make his way along some of the streets, and soon hails a *palkee gharry*, into



which he tumbles and is soon dropped at his destination.

The first person he sees is the faithful Kasee; and when he crooks his finger, the other comes to his side like a flash. He takes his orders from his master, smiles, nods, and is gone. That wonderfully active brain of Kasee's will handle the matter well. No fear of his making a blunder. The only one Joe has ever known him to make was in bumping his head against that obstruction in the Nile, at the time they were thrown out of the boat in the darkness, and losing his master.

Having finished with Kasee, and seen him well on his way, Mynheer Joe looks up the others who are to figure in this little drama that means so much to the baron. He finds them upon the piazza of the hotel: Sandy lying in a hammock and taking in a story told by a gray-haired old officer of the dreadful scenes he witnessed during the Sepoy rebellion when engaged on the column sent to the relief of Lucknow; Mr. Grimes trying to smoke a native hubble-bubble with indifferent success; while Molly and her father have made themselves as easy as possible in cane chairs, where the grateful shade is densest and the cooling breeze may fan their cheeks.

Rather a picturesque scene they present, the traveller thinks, as he stops to take it in. At this moment Molly spies him and starts up,

Then, as if remembering herself, she turns scarlet, makes a movement as though about to be seated again, changes her mind and bravely advances toward Joe.



"Well done!" is the mental comment of that gentleman, who has noted all the phases of this struggle, and begins to believe deep down in his heart there may be some truth in what Mr. Grimes has told him.

He is too shrewd to give himself away, however, and looks very innocent as he greets Miss Tanner.

"Great Jehosaphat! Is that you, Joe? Come up here, young man, and give a strict account of yourself!" burst out the sweet voice of the big Illinois senator.

And if the crocodiles of the Ganges could hear the full tenor of his siren notes, they would weep tears of envy and bellow no more. Talk about your steam fog-horn! The Honorable Demosthenes could extinguished such a toy with one blast, and then hardly half try.

This is an invitation such as Joe wants, and to the interested quartette he is soon relating what he has done to relieve them of the baron, whose presence in India means trouble for all.







## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE NOTE THAT DOWNED THE RUSSIAN.

The facts are soon made plain, and every one understands the game that Mr. Grimes and Mynheer Joe have hatched up between them. It is simple and yet seems to have the necessary qualities to insure success.

As Mr. Grimes predicted to his companion, the young American girl is ready to join in the game. She knows the risk and dares undertake it for the good of the little company. The case has at any rate reached a point when heroic treatment is necessary in order to accomplish a cure. Such instances arrive in the affairs of men as well as in surgery.

When all has been arranged, each one of the company is satisfied, and the game goes on. The baron has not been seen since Mr. Grimes pointed him out, but he can easily be found when wanted.

It is now well on toward noon, and the balance of the drama must be played within twelve hours, for Captain Ben hopes to sail long ere another morning breaks upon Bombay.

Each goes to the appointed task. Within the



hour a messenger is searching for the baron, bearing a note without a signature, but which is couched in language calculated to cause the Russian to smack his lips with pride and satisfaction, confident that his conquest is nearly completed, the beautiful American bird almost within his grasp, being unable to resist the charms of a title.

These foreigners have come to the conclusion that any American beauty or heiress will give up even the man she loves, to grasp a coronet. Perhaps a few glaring instances of this kind have made them believe that way. They need taking down, and Molly Tanner is just the one to champion her sex, and teach the aristocracy a lesson. All American girls are not for sale. Those whom these foreigners buy do not represent the true element of Yankee lassies, but are in themselves tainted with that abject reverence for title so noticeable in England and other foreign countries.

It was just ten minutes of two when the baron receives this scented *billet doux*. He is in a fashionable club, to which he has gained entry through letters of introduction, and for purposes of his own. At the time he chances to be engaged in a game of billiards with a French gentleman of note, travelling in India to see the country, so it is said, although there are suspicions that he meets the baron by appointment.

France and Russia are hand in glove. Their interests do not clash, and both secretly hate England. In the event of a general European war, in which Great Britain received a drubbing, Turkey and India would be the spoils of Russia, while Egypt



must fall to France. These things are talked of in India, where the British troops are but a drop in the bucket compared to the natives, and every move upon the chess-board of Europe finds its responsive throb over the Indian Ocean. Besides, the peculiarity of their position causes them to see things in a different light.

When the baron has read his note, he looks pleased, and his French companion laughs aloud.

"Success, baron, eh? You are a lady-killer. Who would think it, a man given over to diplomatic intercourse such as my friend, and yet finds time for these little amours. I congratulate you. Who is it, *mon ami*?"

The baron shakes his head, and gently deposits the perfumed note in his inner pocket.

"That would be telling, *monsieur*. I never give my secrets away until I am sure. The bird flutters, but I cannot call it mine until my hand closes around it. Enough to say, I am afraid the baron is caught at last."

"*Mon Dieu!* Is it so serious as that? I had not thought it meant so much. It is too bad, baron, that the event of your life should come upon you while on this trip."

The Russian gives him a look that means much.

"Never fear, Monsieur Lamar; I am equal to the occasion!"

They drop the subject and knock the balls about for some time longer. It is evident, however, that the baron's letter has broken up his style, for he plays like an amateur and finally drops his cue in disgust, excusing himself to his friend.



He hardly knows how to pass the time away until evening, and the hours must seem like an eternity to his impatient soul.

During the afternoon he has callers at his rooms ; several men come to confer with him in a mysterious way. It is evident that the baron has connections here in Bombay with a powerful clique. This makes it doubtful whether the clever little scheme of the Americans can be made a success, for some one of these elements may happen upon the game and discover the truth. Still, such men as Mynheer Joe and Mr. Grimes can be trusted to stand up against all comers and hold their own.

Thus the day draws to a close, and the momentous night creeps over the city on the sacred river—a night that will be fraught with great events to several of our characters.

All hail the coming of evening with joy, for the hours have dragged at the last. Even the natives rejoice at the setting of the sun. Some of them are worshipers of the great fire-god, and can be seen doing reverence to his descent behind the watery horizon. There are Mohammedans on their knees with their faces toward distant Mecca, oblivious of all save their prayers, accompanied by the most fantastic bending of the body.

These sights are so common in all Eastern countries that the old traveller fails to notice them beyond a casual glance.

Baron Popoff, after his dinner, proceeds to make an elaborate toilet. He is always something of a dandy, but on this particular night he waxes his



mustache with particular care, so that the ends stand out like needles.

When ready to sally forth, he surveys himself in the glass, smiles with satisfaction, as though personally well-pleased with his appearance, gives a last twirl at his mustache and then leaves the house.

Already he has seen to his preparations, and a *shigram* is waiting at the door, managed by one of his own men. The baron is suspicious by nature and likes not the idea of being driven about the dark streets of Bombay by one in whom he puts no confidence.

"Kito, you have your orders," he says in English, which language most Hindoos speak.

"Oh, yes, *sahib*—the hotel; it is all right," replies the Hindoo driver, who has been bought, body and soul, with Russian gold.

Away they go; and *en route* the baron chuckles to himself a dozen times as he pictures the consternation and jealous rage of his Yankee rival at finding him so favored by the fair American. He caresses the scented note from time to time, and has read it so often that each word comes distinctly before him, thus:

"The writer begs leave to inform the baron that she will receive him at eight this evening and be at home to no one else. Regarding the proposition contained in his letter, the near future can decide better than the present."

What can he make of this other than a willingness to surrender? He, the cunning diplomat, who in



times past has met and successfully wrestled with the most masterly questions of the day, now finds himself in the toils of the merciless little god Cupid, who throws dust in his eyes and temporarily blinds him.

At the appointed time the vehicle pulls up before the hotel, and Baron Popoff alights. He bows to several people, looks at his time-piece, smiles to note the exactness of his arrival; for the diplomat is a great stickler at punctuality, and, if going to his execution, would want the volley fired at the proper time to the second.

Then he enters the caravansary and gives his card to a waiter. Presently that functionary returns with the information that the lady is in the parlor, and conducts the baron thither.

He finds Molly and her father in the small parlor, quite alone. The presence of the senator is not exactly to the liking of this ardent lover; but since the game seems to be playing into his hands, he does not see how he can feel very badly about it. After all, the question is only one of time. He believes he has won by virtue of his name, and the father as well as the daughter favors his suit.

No one knows better how to carry himself in the drawing-room than the baron, for he has mixed much with royalty in his own land and other countries where he has been sent as Russia's agent.

He apologizes to Demosthenes Tanner for the scene in Cairo, and hopes it has been quite forgotten. At this the giant from Illinois laughs good-naturedly and declares that all parties ought to be satisfied; at least, as he and the baron came out of



the small end of the horn together, there is no reason they should be foes.

Conversation becomes general, and the diplomat exerts himself to make a good impression on the stout legislator and his daughter. He has a large bump of conceit, and believes that as the evening passes he draws nearer his goal.

Several times he finds an opportunity to whisper to Molly. She blushes beautifully and holds a warning finger up, saying:

“Not yet, baron. You must wait until we know each other better.”

Then the courteous Russian bows and smiles and mentally pats his shoulder as he sees victory in the near future. Poor fool! So the mighty Samson of old may have congratulated himself when making love to Delilah, never dreaming that he would awaken to find his head shorn and his strength gone. So many another giant in the history of the world has been brought to his Waterloo by means of the blinding god Cupid.

One thing gives the baron the keenest delight. He drinks the sweet cup to the dregs. While engaged in an animated conversation with Molly, as he describes the glories of the Russian capital in winter, he chances to glance toward the end of the little parlor.

Here a fine mirror is set in the wall, for the furnishings of the room are superb. It is in this glass he sees what pleases him.

A man stands in the large drawing-room—a man he has good reason to remember, since it was his sword that pierced the baron's shoulder under the



palms on the bank of the Nile. Mynheer Joe makes no move to advance. He seems to have come upon the scene by accident, and is rooted to the spot. The wily diplomat sees his opportunity. He will now proceed to put a weapon more painful than a sword into the Yankee's heart.

"If you will pardon me for taking your hand, Miss Tanner," pleaded the baron, "I will explain to you how the ladies are supposed to act when being presented to the czarina, as I hope ere long you will have that pleasure."

She allows it, of course, although half understanding his *motif*. That is the picture Mynheer Joe gazes upon—his hated rival in the act of raising Molly's sweet hand to his lips.

All the while the baron has one eye on the mirror. He sees the look of fury upon Joe's face, notes that he presses a hand against his brow, as though struck a blow, and turning, rushes out of the room.

Then the diplomat smiles. He no longer feels the pain in his shoulder. It has been wiped out by this last clever stroke of fortune, since he believes he has given better than he received—a Roland for an Oliver.

The Russian's cup is full to overflowing. He thinks fortune has turned to smile upon him again. It is like a toboggan slide—one has to toil up the hill, but the exhilaration of the descent pays for the trouble.

In that descent, so speedy and grand, all obstacles must be swept out of the way. Since Mynheer Joe is one of these obstructions he will find him-



self hurled through space perhaps before he knows what is wrong.

Little does the wily baron suspect that all this affair is a deep-laid scheme, which has for its foundation the desire to rid the little company of his hated presence. They find it impossible to breathe in the same air as the diplomat, and hence there must be an exodus on the part of someone.

Like everything else in this world, the evening must come to an end, although the baron makes no note of the lapse of time. He finds the old senator yawning frequently with a noise like the rushing of a mighty wind through the forest, and wonders why he does not betake himself off; but the legislator shows no signs of doing it. Evidently the suitor must content himself with the progress already made, and leave the balance for another time.

He makes an engagement for the following morning—immediately after breakfast he will be on hand with a *palkee gharry* to take Miss Tanner and her father to meet some of the highest dignitaries of India, just at this time chancing to be in Bombay. The American girl accepts the invitation in a way that at another time might excite a little suspicion in the brain of the diplomat, but just now he is too intoxicated by love to notice it. This is what Miss Molly says:

“We will be ready to go with you *when you come*, baron. Eight o'clock, remember.”

“To the minute,” he responds, bowing low over her hand and even daring to press it.

The young girl smiles as she bids him good-night, while Demosthenes bubbles over in his effusive way.



Both are thinking of the same thing, that at eight o'clock on the following day Baron Popoff in order to keep his engagement may have to walk over miles of green water, unless the carefully laid plans of the plotters fail to operate.

The next hour will tell. It is fraught with deep suspense for Molly. The senator retires, but she continues to keep her seat in the parlor, awaiting news.







## CHAPTER XXIV.

“BON VOYAGE, MYNHEER JOE !”

The baron finds his vehicle awaiting him just outside the hotel. His driver is on hand, and with his usual form shows the nobleman into the carriage. Some jocular remark is made by the baron, who is in such a decidedly jolly humor that he can even notice a menial.

Just as they are about to move off, a man gives a signal, and the baron stops the vehicle while he holds a low consultation. The driver sits like a statue. If he hears, he gives no evidence of it ; at any rate, the talk must be a sealed book to him, for the men converse in Russian.

“Move on, Kito,” comes the order.

The stranger has not entered the vehicle, and yet, when the driver casts a look behind, he fails to see him. Of course, the shadows are dense along under the trees near the hotel, and it may be he has secreted himself among these. Again it is possible he hangs on behind the vehicle.

Away they go, in a cloud of dust, in the direction of the city proper, where lights still abound, and



there is no sign of sleep, such as would be falling upon an American city at this hour.

The baron leans back in his equipage and gives himself up to delicious reflection. He has won many diplomatic victories in the past, but, really, for the life of him, he cannot remember one that has given him half as much genuine pleasure as this signal conquest.

He declares he is beginning to grow old; that this is the real reason Mynheer Joe got the better of him in the affair of honor. But if he is unable to wield the sword with the same dexterity as of yore, he has gained in other things. As a man grows older, he is apt to prove more foolish with regard to love affairs. The baron knows it, and does not deny the soft impeachment with regard to himself. It is time he was marrying and keeping his place in the family.

These sorts of comfortable reflections come to his mind when he lolls back in comfort in the *shigram* and thinks of the future. Mynheer Joe, outwitted at last and deserted by the fair American, will fly from India. The baron may finish his diplomatic task with honor, proceed with his bride to St. Petersburg and be received with great *éclat* by both potentate and people whom he has mutually served by his brilliant work.

Thus he muses, smoking his cigar meanwhile and taking life as comfortably as he can. It strikes him that the vehicle is tossing about more than is necessary, if the driver has taken the direct road, and the baron idly thrusts his head out of the open window.

The moon is concealed for the time, being back



of some clouds, so that all he can make out is that the neighborhood does not seem familiar. Just then there is a grand lurch; one side of the *shigram* drops into a small cavity in the street, and the baron comes very near being tossed out. He has the breath somewhat shaken from his body by the sudden concussion. The vehicle comes to a sudden stand. This makes the baron furious; he has a violent temper that occasionally flashes into hot heat when things do not go to please him.

"Kito!" he roars, shaking the door.

"*Sahib*, I am here," answers a voice.

"Oh, you are! Unfasten this door! I cannot make it slide," snaps the baron.

"*Sahib*, it opens this way." Whereupon the baron steps out upon the street.

"Where are we?" he demands, looking around at the dimly seen houses, with their strange fronts. "I do not recognize the place. This is not the road from the hotel to my rooms—the road we travelled over in going. Speak, Kito!"

"It is not, *sahib*," meekly replies the humble driver, who stands close by him.

"How does this come, miserable dog?" demands the Russian, half tempted to chastise the wretch who has led him into this pickle.

"It is my fault. I thought to take a short cut to your rooms. The moon betrayed me. I saw not this hole. Thank Allah it is no worse," replies the other, endeavoring apparently to conciliate him; but the enraged Russian grows warmer every minute.

"No worse! You fool, unless we can lift the



wheel out of the hole, I may have to walk—all through your stupidity ! Do you know, I’ve a mind to teach you a lesson such as the serfs in Russia learned long ago !”

With that, the baron, blind with passion, leaps over to the vehicle and snatches the whip.

It is a wicked-looking instrument of torture, especially in the hand of one who knows how to handle such a thing ; and the baron, no doubt, has had enough experience among sledge-dogs during his journeys in the frozen wastes of Siberia to be able to pluck a piece of flesh from a certain spot on an animal. An adept with such a whip can annihilate a horse-fly that has lodged upon the back of the leader, and, although the report sounds like the discharge of a pistol, the animal has not been even touched.

It can be set down as certain, therefore, that the person familiar with a whip has no desire to feel such an instrument of torture laid upon his back or legs. Kito raises his hand in protest.

“Sahib, forbear ! It would not be well for you to strike me,” he says calmly.

The moon has appeared again. It shows a singular spectacle—the *shigram* partly turned over, the angry baron, whip in hand, and the splendid figure of his Hindoo driver standing there in an attitude of fearless warning, his right arm raised as if to keep the Russian from going too far.

Perhaps the baron had seen the knout laid upon wretched humanity so often in his native land that his first inclination is to use a whip upon one for whom he has conceived a sudden anger, not count-



ing the consequences. That may do when applied to the debased serfs of Russia, but it will not be endured in this land, where proud blood flows through the veins of even the meanest of the people.

The baron does not know what he invites. He sees the action of his driver, and instead of moderating his zeal, it enrages him still more.

“You scoundrel! Dare to threaten me, a Russian nobleman! Take that.”

Even as he speaks he gives the cruel whip a sudden momentum. The lash cuts the air and comes with a tremendous snap against the limbs of the Hindoo driver.

He simply gives an exclamation, although the pain must be intense. Hardly has the blow been struck than the athletic form of the driver is seen in motion. Instead of retreating, he springs toward the baron. Already he is too near the Russian for the other to apply the lash a second time.

He immediately drops the whip, having no further use for it, and throws himself into an attitude of self-defense.

In addition to being a master with the foils and a champion pistol-shot, the baron has done what Russian officers do not practice as much as their British cousins; he knows the science of self-defense. He is not a giant in size, nor yet a pigmy, but a well-formed man, with muscles hardened by constant exercise.

Thus, when the Hindoo driver comes plunging at him, Baron Popoff assumes his favorite attitude and



expects to lay the fellow out with one solid blow. Like many another man, he counts without his host.

As the driver reaches the baron, he, too, has his hands before him in pugilistic style. There is a quick interchange of blows, some lightning counters, and the dull sound of a heavy stroke is heard.

Baron Popoff gives no cry, but sinks to the ground several feet away, senseless. Perhaps, in that brief space of time when he finds his most difficult leads met and parried by his antagonist, some dim suspicion of the truth may have flashed into his brain. No common Hindoo driver could use his fists in that style.

Before he has time to form a definite conclusion however, there comes the blow that all his science cannot ward off, and the unlucky Russian knows no more until he opens his eyes on a strange scene, with the shores of India low down in the east.

Others have made their appearance—Mr. Grimes himself. Besides, here is Kasseer and Sandy Barlow.

Then the Hindoo driver, Kito, the man who delivered such a telling blow to the baron, must also be an old acquaintance. Mr. Grimes has him by the hand. In a cheery tone he exclaims:

"That was a knockout worthy of a Sullivan, Mynheer Joe. It cancels all your past obligations to the baron."

"He struck me with the whip, the beggar," says Joe, ruefully rubbing the spot where the terrible lash had flecked him and drawn blood. "It's lucky for him my nature differs from his own, or I'd have his life for that blow."



"If you haven't taken it already. I'm afraid you've broken his neck," says Grimes.

"Oh, no! He'll come to presently. We have the chloroform ready to dose him. Come, lay hold of the wheel. She went in as neat as you please," from which talk it may be inferred that there has been something singular about the accident that has occurred to the baron's *palkee gharry*.

The vehicle is raised upon a sound portion of the pavement. Then the still senseless Russian nobleman is placed within, and Sandy gets alongside, having the chloroform ready, while the man who has taken the place of the original Kito, who lies in a stupor at this hour in the rear of the Malabar Hotel, his liquor having been drugged, mounts to the driver's seat.

"You will look after that party, sir?" he calls back.

"Rest easy. When he comes to, in the morning, he will find himself lying by the Towers of Silence, with no one to tell him how he got there. Go your way, Joe," returns Mr. Grimes.

An hour later, the strange passenger is handed up the side of the good ship *Avalanche*. A few low words are exchanged between the captain and the swarthy Hindoo, whose arms seem of steel; then a warm handshake, a "God bless you, Mynheer Joe!" and they separate.

As Joe and the little newspaper correspondent leave the boat at the *ghaut*, they see the ship gliding toward the sea and bearing the vindictive Russian diplomat to far-away Valparaiso. In all probability he will never cross their path again.



The little party met at the early *chota hazri*, and around the table the story is told in low tones. Even the old war-horse, Demosthenes Tanner, confesses to a feeling of relief, now that the baron will give them no more trouble. He experiences the sensations of a man who, after vainly striking repeatedly at a bothersome fly, finally succeeds by a lucky blow in demolishing his tormentor.

It is not necessary that we should follow these friends further. With the disappearance of the baron from the field, their troubles cease, and the sea before them promises pleasant sailing.

Mynheer Joe manages his case with wisdom and tact. Much planning is done by those concerned, and, finally, when they reach Calcutta, the vivacious Molly becomes Mrs. Mynheer Joe. It is decided that Joe and his bride set sail for China, to explore that country, while the others head for New York, *via* London.

Thus, one pleasant July morning—the most delightful of all months in India—these two stand on the deck of the Hong Kong steamer, waving farewell to the friends on shore, while the fog-horn voice of the Illinois statesman comes over the green waters like a benison, calling:

"*Bong voyage*, Mynheer Joe, *bong voyage* dear boy!"

And there the curtain falls.

THE END.



A Fresh Translation from the German.

# DEAR ELSIE

A Novel.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF  
JOHANNES VAN DEWALL,

BY

MARY J. SAFFORD,

*Translator of "Wife and Woman," "Little Heather-Blossom,"  
"Love Is Lord of All," "True Daughter of  
Hartenstein," etc., etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY WARREN B. DAVIS AND WILSON  
DE MEZA.

12mo. 336 Pages. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. Price, \$1.00.  
Paper Cover, 50 Cents.

All who have read Miss Safford's delightful translations from the German will welcome "Dear Elsie," which is one of the sweetest and prettiest and most artistic novels from the German that we have met with. The characters are quite out of the common run, and glimpses are given of high life in Paris, of brilliant scenes under the Empire, and of the perils of a youthful heiress in the brilliant and corrupt society gathered from all parts of Europe by the lavish display of Louis Napoleon's court at the Tuileries. But in German novels, as in German life, honest love and simplicity and sincerity of character come out of the crucible only purified and strengthened.

For sale by all booksellers and newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

705 ROBERT BONNER'S SONS,  
COR. WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STREETS, NEW YORK.























**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



00022876739